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United States Nationals

Psychatog Continues Dominance

by Josh Bennett

Historically, the U.S. national team has been almost unstoppable. Its wealth of Pro Tour players gives it an unmatched talent pool. This year, they descended on Disney's Wide World of Sports Complex to determine who would earn the right to represent their country at the **Magic** World Championships.

One of the big changes affecting the tournament was the reversal of the Draft and Standard Constructed portions. Ordinarily, Day 1 was Draft, allowing players who went 6-0 to audible to a "safe" deck in a bid to get the necessary 3-2-1 finish. That luxury no longer existed.

There were plenty of cues about what decks would be played. Following Eric Taylor's win at Grand Prix–Milwaukee, most of the talk leading up to Nationals was about his "Trenches" deck. Psychatog had bounced back from one supposed death thanks to the innovation of Zev Gurwitz and his Standstill technology. "Zevatog" was no longer viable, however, and Brian Kibler's quarterfinal exit at Milwaukee with a retooled Psychatog seemed to suggest that Dr. Teeth's day was done.

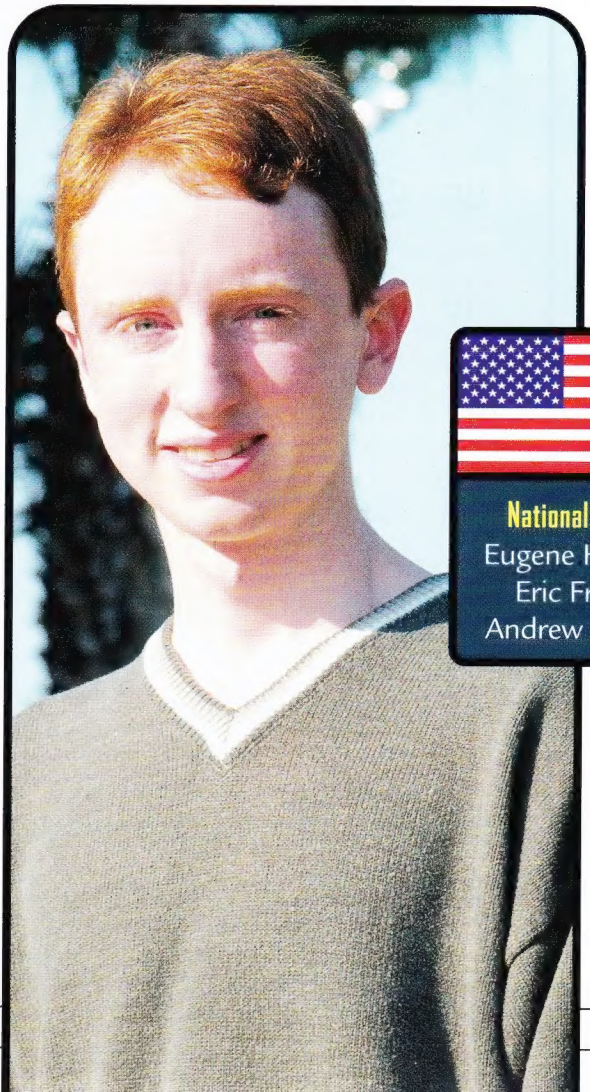
On the other side of the Atlantic, it was another story. Psychatog ran wild at the National Championships of Sweden, the Netherlands, and Germany. At this last, none other than Kai Budde himself emerged champion. One tournament report and a tell-all guide to beating Trenches later, Psychatog was on everyone's lips.

Also garnering support after Milwaukee was Mike Turian's "Squirrel-Opposition" deck. Though Pat Chapin's two-tone version brought him to the finals, Turian's red-splashing version caught people's interest. All these control decks seemed to foretell a metagame shift to red-green, but the tops of the grinders were filled with Psychatog.

Looking over the decks of Day 1, the field of 199 was pretty well defined. Taking up almost a third were 66 Psychatog decks, few of them deviating from Budde's Decree. Next in line with a whopping 36 pilots was Squirrel-Opposition, mostly Turian's design. After that came 20 blue-green madness decks, including many of the English "Deep Dog" design, whose madness-enablers do double-duty on Deep Analysis and Roar of the Wurm. Next up were eighteen red-green, most of which ran the hateful Yavimaya Barbarian. Rounding out the majority were 12 Trenches decks.

At the end of Day 1, it was Grand Prix–New Orleans Champion Bill Stead on top of the standings. He was playing Psychatog, but his version ran four Merfolk Looters and four Shadowmage Infiltrators in place of some business spells. Joining him at 6-0 were Andrew Ranks and Eric Franz, both with Budde-approved Psychatog.

Heading up the 5-1's were Peter Jesuale and Aaron Amendolia, who surprised the field with a throwback to the days of *Invasion* Block Constructed: red-blue-white aggro. The rest of the eighteen were mostly made up of red-green beatdown, Squirrel-Opposition, and Psychatog, piloted by such names as Eugene Harvey, Osyp Lebedowicz, Alex Borteh, and Alex Shvartsman. Some players found success deviating from the crowd. Brian Gates had a green-red-black madness deck that operated off Zombie Infestation, and Tim Roderick played a green-black-blue deck that abused flashback cards via Last Rites.



Not all innovation was richly rewarded. Brian Davis piloted "When Sorceries Attack!", a black control deck that splashed Recoup and Overmaster, designed by Adrian Sullivan and Brian Kowal. A decisive victory over Mike Pustilnik in the first round did not herald subsequent wins, and he dropped from the tournament before the day was out. Darwin Kastle and Dave Humpherys brought "Umbrella Corp.", a four-color Obliterate-based deck. Kastle managed a respectable 4-2, but Humpherys could only find a win and a draw over six rounds.

Many of the game's stars had a rough go of it. Brian Kibler, Mike Long, William Jensen, Eric Taylor, Steve O'Mahoney-Shwartz, and Jon Finkel were all languishing in the sixties by the end of the day, needing to win out to play on Sunday. For Finkel and OMS, this was particularly disturbing, as neither had an invitation to Worlds yet. A year ago, the idea of Jon Finkel falling off the train was laughable. Now the former Best Player Ever needed to 6-0 and then some to make the Tour's next stop. Stories of his demise had already started circulating.

Day 2 was Booster Draft, in the relatively young *Odyssey-Torment-Judgment* format. Those players participating in the open beta test for ***Magic** Online* got a bit of a leg-up, as *Judgment* had been implemented into the program just a few days earlier. Prevailing wisdom stated that white was no longer a risky proposition, and that blue and green were still the goods.

Ranks continued to show his golden touch, sweeping his first pod then winning one more to put himself at a comfortable 10-0. An unintentional draw with Eugene Harvey took away his perfect day. He met Eric Franz in the final round, but Franz was able to hand him his first loss, securing himself a berth in the Top 8.

Bill Stead had a good chance to join the Day 1 undefeateds in the Top 8. Though his first draft took him directly to 0-3, he managed to win two straight in his second pod. All he had to do to make the grade was beat Mike Long—no small task. Not only is Long a fixture at U.S. Nationals, with four Top 8's to his name, he'd also won his last five straight matches. For Long, their match was a chance to disprove his doubters, who'd celebrated the supposed end of his career when he failed to qualify for Nationals last year. The match was quick and brutal. A decisive 2-0 victory gave the spotlight back to Long.

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NATIONALS™

An intentional draw put both Matt Rubin and Alex Borteh into the elimination rounds. Eugene Harvey and Josh Napper also intentionally drew in round 12, putting Napper in the money and Harvey in the Top 8. Blake Quelle and Peter Jesuale managed to win rounds 11 and 12 to complete the Top 8.

Ken Krouner, Mike Turian, Tony Tsai, and Brian Kibler missed the cut on tiebreakers. This continues Turian's string of almost-but-not-quite finishes at Nationals. The sting was tremendous for Krouner, whose 6-0 on the day landed him ninth. Jon Finkel finished sixteenth, short of glory but with wins that could boost his rating high enough for a Worlds invite. He was knocked out of contention in round 9 by longtime friend Steve O'Mahoney-Shwartz, who would finish 34th.

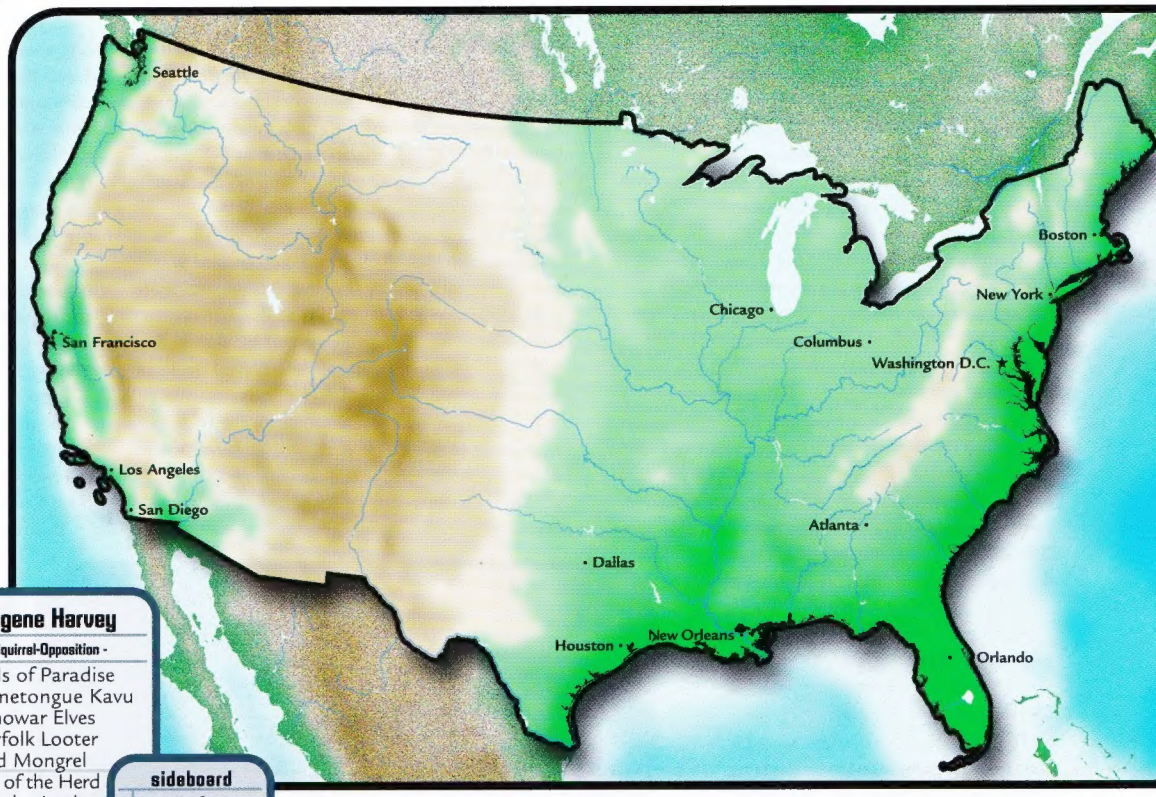
The Top 8 were a motley bunch. On one side were the proven talents of Long, Borteh, and Harvey. On the other, the New School of Rubin, Quelle, Ranks, Jesuale, and Franz. The other division was between Psychatog (Borteh, Rubin, Ranks, and Franz, all nearly identical versions) and non-Tog. Long had a version of Deep Dog with white mana for sideboard options. Quelle had the Regionals-demolishing tech of red-blue-green madness. Harvey was with Turian-approved Squirrel-Opposition. Jesuale had his "Star-Spangled Slaughter." All were tense for the quarterfinals. There would be no double-elimination this year, just a playoff between the semifinal losers to determine third and fourth. So much was riding on the first match.

For his quarterfinal against Ranks, Quelle borrowed Peter Szigeti's fur coat. He tried to use his laughable appearance to put Ranks off his game, but Ranks was as stone-faced as ever. They went the full five games, and it looked like Quelle would steal when he responded to Upheaval with three floating with Disrupt, Disrupt, then Circular Logic. But Ranks's Nightscape Familiar let him force through Psychatog with Memory Lapse, advancing him to the semifinals.

Harvey was happy to square off against Matt Rubin. Psychatog is a favorable matchup for Harvey, and the four games they played proved it. Harvey's pressure forced Rubin to tap out early on, leaving him unable to stop Opposition. He rarely had time to find his Recoils to escape. Also enjoying a walk in the park was Eric Franz, who breezed through his match against Peter Jesuale. Jesuale's shortness on aggressive creatures and counters let Franz play the match at his pace, winning in the long game.

All eyes were on the Long-Borteh match. It was a back-and-forth affair, with the two trading games until there was only one left to be won. Borteh got to go first, a huge advantage. He kept Long from getting any distinct advantage, and when the time came, Upheaval sealed the deal.

Borteh drew Franz for the mirror-match. He dropped the first game to mana problems, missing his third and fourth turn drops. He evened the match quickly with a gassy draw that Franz couldn't stop. Franz was not to be denied. In two snail's-paced games, he and Borteh exchanged card-drawing and counterspells, always just short of catastrophe. In both games, Franz was able to edge Borteh out, taking the match after a long struggle.



Eugene Harvey

- Squirrel-Opposition -

4	Birds of Paradise
3	Flametongue Kavu
3	Llanowar Elves
4	Merfolk Looter
4	Wild Mongrel
2	Call of the Herd
4	Circular Logic
4	Deep Analysis
3	Fire/Ice
4	Opposition
4	Squirrel Nest
7	Forest
5	Island
3	Karplusan Forest
2	Shivan Reef
4	Yavimaya Coast

sideboard

1	Aura Graft
1	Call of the Herd
1	Flametongue Kavu
4	Gainsay
3	Jade Leech
2	Static Orb
2	Unnatural Selection
1	Upheaval

Ranks was up 2-1 early in his match against Harvey. The first game ended with him completely locked up, but he rallied in the next two. The match seemed to be his as Harvey double-mulliganed in the fourth, but Ranks sent his first hand back and kept a questionable hand containing just Salt Marsh. Harvey drew into some punishing plays, and they were on to game five. An early Squirrel Nest had Ranks on the ropes. He was forced to Upheaval and let Harvey play the first land. Birds of Paradise accelerated Squirrel Nest. Ranks managed Recoil, but Harvey followed up with Opposition. Static Orb put Harvey in the finals.

There he met Franz. After the nailbiter against Ranks, Harvey's good fortune came back to him. He took the first quickly and bounced back from Upheaval-Psychatog to win the second. He played land, Elf and chumped, then two Elves and chumped, then a Wild Mongrel that meant that Franz couldn't attack. Another Mongrel with Logic to protect it, and the game was his. The third proceeded in more pedestrian fashion when Franz mulliganed and suffered under a land-heavy draw.

In the playoff, Ranks took on Borteh. A drawn-out first game went to Ranks, then the second as well after Borteh never played a second land. In the third, Ranks waited until after demolishing Borteh's hand to push through Upheaval. Though he didn't have Psychatog, Possessed Aven did the job, leaving Borteh just shy of the team for the second straight year.

And what about Eugene Harvey? Last year he was the guy no one knew, and he spent the season teaching people his name. He capped it off by taking the hometown title in decisive fashion. He joins Mike Long and Jon Finkel on the list of players with multiple U.S. national team appearances. His presence alone is enough to get some people excited about the U.S.'s chances at Worlds. But look at the talents of Ranks and Franz. Ranks's 10-0 against some of the game's toughest competition speaks volumes, and Franz came out of nowhere to finish second. It wouldn't be a shock to see them "Pull a Harvey" of their own this year.

Dutch Nationals

The Dutch Put Up the Team to Beat

by Stan van der Velden

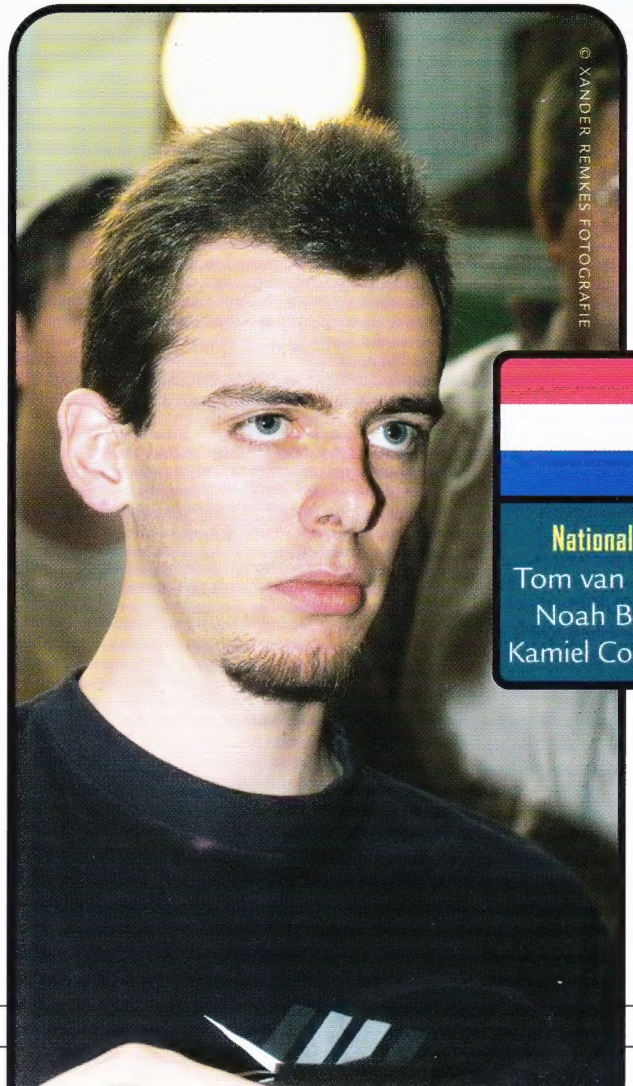
U.S. Nationals has long been considered the toughest national tournament on earth, but lately the U.S. dominance has been overshadowed by the rise of several successful European countries. While the most successful "country" would probably have to be Kai Budde, the Netherlands has put up some impressive finishes over the last season with a Masters win and several Pro Tour Top 8 finishes, not to mention a Worlds title. Although the Netherlands has more than its share of talented players, there was no doubt among the competitors who would claim first place when the tournament was over. Tom "The Champ" van de Logt seems to have the impressive ability to do well at Nationals and Worlds, not only making the Dutch national team in both 2000 and 2001, but also placing in the Top 8 at Worlds in both years. With that question answered, the battle for second and third place was going to be an interesting one, as the Dutch **Magic** community has turned out many capable players over the last two years. Among the favorites were Pro Tour mainstays Kamiel Cornelissen, Jelger Wiegersma, Bram Snepvangers, and Noah Boeken; Masters Gateway specialist Alexander Witt; and Frank Karsten and Jeroen Remie, who, like van de Logt, have made the national team at the last two Dutch National Championship tournaments.

This year, the tournament took place in Maarssen, a small town near Utrecht, under the watchful eye of one of the Dutch Vikings and Level 3 judge, Jaap Brouwer. The original head judge and second Dutch Viking, Gis Hoogendijk, was actually playing in the tournament after making Top 8 at a Regional tournament, causing PS Games, the Dutch distributor, to drag Brouwer out of his semi-retirement. Although he didn't plan on judging any events until the European Championships, Jaap agreed to judge Dutch Nationals to help out PS Games. Despite a little rustiness, he did a very good job, and compliments go out to him and the entire judging staff for a well-run tournament without any unpleasant incidents.

Day 1 would feature two *Odyssey-Odyssey-Torment* Booster Drafts, which would determine who was going to come back on Sunday with Top 8 dreams still intact, and who would get to sleep in. Another interesting feature was that this was the first time that players could playtest drafting from the comfort of their chairs, with the convenience of ***Magic Online***. The consensus among the top players was that playing the actual matches on the program didn't help much because of the low level of competition. The draft itself, on the other hand, still provided valuable practice to the players who didn't have the opportunity to do regular drafts in their own areas.

After six rounds, Noah Boeken found himself on top of the standings. He went 3-0 in the final draft, where he was one of two white drafters and was rewarded with a sixth pick Kirtar's Wrath. He was closely followed by Tom van de Logt at 5-1 and the entire Cornelissen family, with Kamiel in the lead among the brothers with a record of 5-0-1.

Day 2 was Standard day, bringing with it the politics of teams and playtesting. Standard was more or less defined by the time Dutch Nationals came around, and it seemed that Psychatog, Goblin Trenches, and some sort of blue-green madness deck would be the most-played decks in the environment. Fortunately for those staying at a place with an Internet connection, the top decks from Day 1 of Grand Prix–Milwaukee were posted before the Standard portion began, and some people decided to run the "Squirrel-Opposition" deck built by Mike Turian.



It would soon become apparent that most of the top Dutch teams had come to the same conclusion: Psychatog was king. Almost all of the players at the top of the standings chose to run a version of the well-known Psychatog deck, and it seemed as though the Top 8 was going to be decided on who had the better sideboard for the mirror match. The Amsterdam players showed up with a version that was designed specifically for that purpose. Between main deck Compulsion and Deep Analysis and sideboarded Unnatural Selection and Duress, their deck was as well prepared as possible for the mirror. Only one team disagreed and showed up with a blue-green deck that resembled "Deep Dog", the deck that ran the tables at English Nationals. Unfortunately for them, their version was not as good, and no one who played it made it to the Top 8.

After round 9, Noah Boeken was the first player who was sure of a Top 8 spot. He was soon joined by Tom van de Logt, Wessel Oomens, and Kamiel Cornelissen, who were all playing some version of Psychatog. After round 12, the rest of the Top 8 consisted of Jonne Assen, running yet another Psychatog deck, Leendert Willem Kleinveld with blue-green-red madness, Pepijn van Abbe with red-green, and Jesse Cornelissen with Goblin Trenches.

This made for some interesting matchups in a quarterfinal round that was more important than ever this year. Due to time issues, the DCI decided that the Top 8 would be single elimination this year, which met with a lot of complaints from players around the world. It seemed unfair that no matter how well you did in the Swiss portion of the tournament, one bad matchup or even some bad draws could eliminate you from contention for a spot on the national team and a Worlds qualification.

The first quarterfinal match was a Psychatog mirror between newcomer Jonne Assen and veteran Kamiel Cornelissen. Cornelissen had copied Brian Kibler's decklist from Grand Prix–Milwaukee, while Assen played the Psychatog deck developed by team Utrecht. The main difference between their lists was that where Jonne ran Force Spike and Compulsion, Kamiel was running Probe and Memory Lapse. This seemed to favor Cornelissen—not to mention the fact that Assen had never played his deck before the first round of Day 2. Kamiel did indeed win in a quick 2-0, with his Probes overpowering Jonne's Compulsions.

The second quarterfinal match featured two friends from Amsterdam, as Grand Prix–Barcelona champion Noah Boeken took on old-school player Pepijn van Abbe.

Van Abbe was running green-red with a lot of fast creatures and burn, including the troublesome Yavimaya Barbarian, whose protection from blue makes it unblockable by Psychatog as well as immune to bounce spells. Boeken was with the Amsterdam version of Psychatog, metagamed to take on other control decks while giving up its advantage against creature decks. Pepijn seemed to have an edge in this matchup, but in the end he lost 2-1 because of his deck's fragile mana base and Noah's Sickening Dreams and Ghastly Demises.

The third quarterfinal match was a battle between yet another Psychatog deck and blue-green-red madness, as Tom van de Logt and Leendert Willem Kleinveld played for a coveted spot on the national team. This match proved once again that it's very hard for any deck to stop a well-tuned Psychatog deck. Leendert's threat-light blue-green-red deck stood no chance against Tom and his trusty Atogs.

In the first three quarterfinal matches, not a single player who was unqualified for Worlds managed to win his match, making for a Top 4 with 3 players who were already qualified. The fourth quarterfinal was the only match that would definitely send someone to Sydney, with yet another Psychatog deck in the hands of Wessel Oomens taking on Kamiel's brother Jesse Cornelissen, who was with Trenches. Wessel finished in fourth place last year, and Jesse won Dutch Nationals two years ago, so both were looking for a repeat performance. Oomens had a definite advantage going into the match, as his deck was the same as Boeken's, designed to give other control decks fits. Jesse copied Tomi Walamies's winning deck and proved that Trenches was still a force to be reckoned with. They split the first two games, and with a Top 4 spot on the line, Oomens decided to gamble and keep a hand with no black mana and a couple of Duresses. He never drew the black mana he needed, and Cornelissen rode his Goblin Trenches to victory.

Tom van de Logt

- Psychatog -

4	Nightscape Familiar
4	Psychatog
4	Circular Logic
4	Counterspell
4	Fact or Fiction
3	Memory Lapse
4	Opt
3	Probe
4	Repulse
2	Upheaval
1	Cephalid Coliseum
2	Darkwater Catacombs
10	Island
4	Salt Marsh
3	Swamp
4	Underground River

sideboard

1	Deep Analysis
4	Exclude
4	Gainsay
4	Ghastly Demise
2	Lobotomy

The first semifinal featured the Psychatog-Trenches matchup, as brother played brother for a guaranteed spot on the national team. The first game went to Kamiel after he played out all four of his Psychatogs and overwhelmed Jesse, whose Goblins had to chump the Atogs every turn. In the second game, Jesse lost all of his copies of Trenches to a Lobotomy and made a judgment call on a Fact or Fiction that turned out to be incorrect. Jesse ended up losing to a Psychatog and a Nightscape Familiar with a hand full of counters. The other semifinal was almost decided before it even began, as Noah Boeken took on eternal champion Tom van de Logt in the Psychatog mirror match, which should have favored Boeken and his metagamed Psychatog deck. Divine intervention, though, assured that it was van de Logt who reached the finals. Boeken was mana screwed twice, getting stuck on four lands in the first game and two in the third.

Van de Logt then beat Kamiel Cornelissen in the exact mirror match, as both of them had copied Brian Kibler's Psychatog deck from Milwaukee the night before. Van de Logt won despite making various mistakes throughout the three games it took him to beat professional runner-up Cornelissen. Tom managed to claim the title of Dutch National Champion for the third time and a national team spot for the fourth time, proving that his nickname is well deserved.

The match for third place was a real nailbiter, but Boeken pulled it off with two consecutive lucky topdecks, making this year's Dutch national team very, very impressive. The only thing that seems to stand between them and the title is the fact that three good players do not necessarily make for a good team. But with van de Logt being the Worlds expert, Kamiel Cornelissen being the best Dutch **Magic** player, and Boeken having a lot of Team Limited experience, they seem poised to take the title from the U.S. this year.

English Nationals

Waterhouse Swarms His Way to Victory

by Gary Wise

It has to happen eventually. In any endeavor, the old guard, through aging, complacency, or what-have-you, must be surpassed by the new, regardless of any effort to avoid fate. This drama has played itself out time and again; despite all effort, there's nothing the old can do to stop the new. One needs to look no further than this year's English National Championship for proof.

England has its share of old. Tony Dobson, 1999 Pro Tour–Chicago Top 8 finisher, retired from the competitive **Magic** scene but came back to compete in Nationals. Same goes for Mark Wraith, a regular Pro Tour attendee for years who stopped travelling to tournaments in favor of life in the private sector. For this tournament though, the old guard would be best represented by the residents of a 500-year-old structure once owned by King Henry VIII.

Going into the tournament, when asking about favorites, three little words would likely have sufficed: Hampton Court Palace. England doesn't have many international competitors, but those Englishmen who regularly travel abroad for **Magic** tournaments do most of their playtesting in the home of former English champ Ben Ronaldson and his housemate, Gary Wise. John Ormerod and two-time National Champion Ollie Schneider combine with these two for most of England's Pro Tour experience, and that exposure to high level competition left many feeling that they had the edge coming into the tournament that would decide which three players would represent England at this year's World Championships.

Transplanted Canadian Wise, Oxford attendee Antoine Menard, and South African import Andrew Mitchell led to some serious discussion about the problems facing English **Magic** before the tournament, with fears of a non-English English national team surfacing. When one of the three donated an English flag to be given to the winner, though, it became apparent to all involved that the foreigners had enough pride in their adopted country to represent it.

Held in Birmingham for the second straight year, this year's Nationals promised to be one of the most competitive to date by virtue of the numbers of people involved. More than 250 players qualified from Pro Tour points, Regional tournaments, and ratings attended, with Head Judge Colin Smith capably maintaining them within the confines of the National Motorbike Museum.

Day 1 brought high expectations for the country's better-known players, as English draft technology was considered by most to be mediocre at best. Those expectations were dashed by surprisingly poor performances. Competing in the *Odyssey-Odyssey-Torment* Booster Draft arena, Wise went 3-2-1 while Ormerod managed only a meagre 3-3 record. Unknown Tu Nguyen took the tournament lead at 6-0 after the first day, with Tim O'Donnell close behind at 5-0-1.

The pre-*Judgment* Standard environment of Day 2 was dominated by two decks: Psychatog, the most-played deck in the field, and "Deep Dog", a blue-green or blue-green-white (for Mystic Enforcer) madness deck with no bounce spells that was created by Ben Ronaldson. Ronaldson went 4-0-2 and Schneider went 4-1-1 while Wise and Ormerod each went 6-0, allowing HCP to make a charge at the end of the Swiss. As a result, Ormerod finished ninth despite taking Constructed-day honors, while his three teammates made it to the single-elimination rounds. Other decks making notable appearances were blue-red madness, played by Menard and some teammates; "Squirrel-Opposition", the second most popular deck in the field; and red-green, which was expected in droves thanks to the deck winning Scottish Nationals only two weeks earlier.

While Nguyen and his Burning Bridge deck lost the last round of the Swiss to miss the Top 8, a number of players with Pro Tour experience managed to join the HCP trio. Mark Waterhouse, playing red-green, dominated the Swiss, securing a spot in the Top 8 with two rounds to go. Sam Gomersoll, a veteran of multiple Pro Tour events, piloted Psychatog to a final round win to advance. Tom Harle, recently retired from competitive play, made his comeback official when he and his black-green Ichorid-Buried Alive deck won the final round to advance. Pro Tour veteran Dave Grant, recently returned from a trip to Southeast Asia, also returned to the competitive scene (after some time in retirement) playing red-green. The Top 8 was rounded out by Psychatog-wielding Kevin Hewitson, who narrowly edged Ormerod out on tiebreakers. Following Ormerod in the standings were Tony Adams, an admitted casual player who played Psychatog, and Paul Hawkins, an out-of-practice friend of HCP who makes occasional comebacks at this time of year. Hawkins played the three-color version of Deep Dog.

Unfortunately for HCP, the luck seemed to run out at the wrong time. Wise, living on borrowed time after his 6-0 run in Constructed, double mulliganed en route to a quick bow out to Grant. Schneider, playing what his team felt was a good matchup, came up mana shy in his match against Gomersall, and Ronaldson, with easily the worst matchup of the three, couldn't compete with Harle's massive amounts of sideboarded creature kill. While it appeared that this might cost him a spot at Worlds, his late run at the European Championship would eventually qualify him on rating. In the fourth quarterfinal, Waterhouse emerged victorious in a battle of big men, taking Hewitson out quickly.

With Harle, Gomersoll, Grant, and Waterhouse now qualified for Worlds, they settled down to the task of playing for the National Championship. In one semifinal, Waterhouse dismantled Gomersall, with his main deck Psychatog-hate (namely Urza's Rage, Yavimaya Barbarian, and Blurred Mongoose) serving him well. Grant, the other red-green player, was not so fortunate. In a matchup where the pre-board game was the only good one, Grant's deck failed to perform in the first game, and after Harle had sideboarded in a full compliment of Innocent Bloods, Chainer's Edicts, Mutilates, and Pernicious Deeds to go with Spiritmonger and Mortivore, the result was predictable.

With that loss in tow, Grant set immediately to the task of taking on Gomersall for the third and final spot on the national team. Unfortunately for the world traveller, things didn't go well in the first game. A mediocre draw for Grant allowed Gomersall the time to get a Psychatog into play and then play Fact or Fiction after no blockers were declared, as Antoine Menard was heard in the background muttering "the blue Might of Oaks". Things got worse in game 2 for Grant, whose mulligan produced a hand that would see him die with two land in play while holding three Meteor Storms.

The final looked to be a mismatch, with the more experienced Harle playing the better deck in the matchup, but all weekend long, Mark Waterhouse had been defying the so-called experts, and he wasn't about to stop with one match to go. Harle's draws were sub-par, and Waterhouse and his teammates Chris Clapton and Pete Norris had figured out the red-green deck's appropriate strategy against the green-black nemesis—use burn first and play creatures later. This worked like a charm, and three games later, Waterhouse, 25, was crowned the 2002 English National Champion.

Waterhouse's win in this tournament defied the odds in more ways than one. He'd only won one Pro Tour Qualifier in his career (and that was Sealed Deck), and he'd hardly playtested prior to this tournament, but he had a good idea of what it was he wanted to do. "I like to think of myself as a beatdown player," said the champ, "and red-green seemed like the best way to go. Get the curve down to 'Sligh' levels, play some fast guys and back them up with cards like Yavimaya Barbarian that will get [opponents] low enough to Rage them out. I guess it worked."

Waterhouse, a Nokia system support employee, has always been a player of games. He runs a football (soccer) team, bowls, plays **Dungeons & Dragons**, and will do just about anything involving cards, dice, pool cues, and athletic fields—basically, anything that requires the competitive drive to succeed.

His sideboard had two important innovations that made the matchup against Psychatog more or less a joke. The first was the addition of four Nantuko Blightcutters, more commonly seen in blue-green decks. With most of Psychatog's sideboard hate against red-green requiring swamps, logic said that a 2/2 that couldn't be affected by them was likely the way to go, even if four main deck Grim Lavamancers meant that threshold would seldom be reached. The second was Sudden Impact, an instant that, for four mana, deals 1 point of damage to target player for each card he or she holds in hand. This proved especially important when an opponent played Upheaval or Fact or Fiction. Tapping out for either is far from unheard of, and this red instant let Waterhouse take advantage of that. His best use was for 12 points of damage when Tony Adams cast Fact or Fiction during Waterhouse's end step.

Mark Waterhouse

• Red-Green •

4	Basking Rootwalla
2	Blurred Mongoose
2	Flametongue Kavu
4	Grim Lavamancer
4	Llanowar Elves
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Yavimaya Barbarian
2	Call of the Herd
4	Firebolt
4	Urza's Rage
3	Volcanic Hammer
4	Barbarian Ring
7	Forest
4	Karplusan Forest
2	Mossfire Valley
6	Mountains

sideboard

2	Compost
3	Hull Breach
2	Flametongue Kavu
4	Nantuko Blightcutter
2	Shivan Wurm
2	Sudden Impact

Harle, a seventeen year old from the south of England, built his deck from scratch. Utilizing the synergy between Ichorid and Buried Alive, the deck uses massive board-clearing effects like Pernicious Deed and Mutilate to maintain control of the board until its larger threats, namely Spiritmonger and Nantuko Shade, come down and end the game. The deck doesn't fare better than fifty-fifty against creature-heavy decks before sideboarding, but the conversion sideboard, complete with Innocent Bloods, Chainer's Edicts, and more Mutilates, makes dealing with critters a breeze.

Gomersall, after searching long and hard for a more suitable alternative, decided that if he couldn't beat the Psychatog players, he might as well join them. Sam, presently taking time off from both school and work, is playing **Magic** full time and is considered by most members of the English **Magic** community to be the country's best hope for future international success. His finish at Nationals did little to dissuade them of that notion.

So, as Grant, Harle, and Gomersall head to this year's World Championships in Sydney, they carry the English banner with them. Some may have felt more secure with the idea of the more established Hampton Court veterans wearing the red cross of St. George, but England is a country that has only known failure in the team competition at Worlds. That legacy, however, belonged to the old. Now is the time for the new.

Japanese Nationals

The Land of the Rising Star

by Keita Mori—translated by Ron Foster

Rising Stars

Even before the National Championship began, Japan's **Magic** community was buzzing about who would take the title. With an expanded prize purse—a total of $50,000, with the winner taking home $20,000 of that—only one thing was certain: competition would be fiercer this year than ever. In the end, this year's Nationals proved to be nearly the opposite of last year's. In 2001, one of the major stories was "The Return of a Legend", as Gorou Matsuo came out of retirement to sweep the draft portion of the tournament and take the trophy. This year, it was "Rising Stars", as a new generation of players fought their way to the top. One of the more talked-about subjects over the weekend was Matsuo's decision not to defend his crown. Whereas last year's team was made up of well-known faces—Matsuo, three-time Limited Grand Prix finalist Masahiko Morita, and two-time APAC Champion Masaya Mori—this year's team was made up of fresh faces unlikely to be recognized by anyone outside Japan: Kazuhiko Mitsuya, Michihisa Onoda, and Yuusuke Sasaki. Of the three, only Onoda has ever played in an event outside Japan. Will Mitsuya be able to muster the same calm resolve that won him the Championship when he travels to Sydney? His performance is likely to be the key to the Japanese national team's success or failure.

All Psychatog, All the Time

The Japanese have a reputation for being trend-followers, not trend-setters. This year, however, they were in good company, as top players around the world all chose to play Psychatog. Of course, the deck was a known factor, meaning that everyone considered it when choosing a deck to play, even if they decided against playing it in the end. Still, Psychatog's reputation as the best deck in Standard is not unfounded, as it dominated the field in spite of all the people packing hate for it. Out of 191 players, 60 (nearly a third) chose to go with the monster with the toothy grin.

Still, it takes more to win than just dropping Psychatog and sending it into the red zone. People who thought they could win by downloading a decklist for "Zevatog" or another archetypical Psychatog deck ended up getting swallowed by "Counter-Trenches" or other anti-Atog decks. The metagame shifted toward blue control for this tournament, and players unable to anticipate that shift were left out of the running.

The most popular anti-Atog decks were strong blue decks that used many card advantage spells in an attempt to get one up on their opponent. The decklists for Masahiko Morita, Yuuki Murakami, and Kenji Kimoto—the three undefeated players from Day 1—look remarkably similar, with Probe and Deep Analysis filling up multiple slots. When asked about their card choices, all three indicated that they expected blue to be strong, and looked for a build that was strong against blue. That intuition was on the mark, as the top tables were awash in a sea of blue decks: green-blue madness, green-blue "Squirrel-Opposition", and, of course, Psychatog. Some players went to the extreme with main deck blue hate: Tsuyoshi Fujita packed Lobotomy and Mana Short, while Yuuki Murakami had the powerful Possessed Aven to ward off Psychatog.

Still, the data speaks for itself: At the end of six Swiss rounds of Standard, eight of the top sixteen players were playing Psychatog decks. Most of them had Probe and Deep Analysis, or at least one of those two cards, in their main deck. In the Top 8, half the decks were Psychatog. The other decks that managed to stay afloat amidst the sea of Psychatogs were a black control deck (played by Hiroki Okamoto), green-blue-red madness (played by Koutarou Ootsuka), black-white "Noir" (played by Michihisa Onoda), and a "Steroid" deck (played by Takaki Nakano).

Judgment

While Psychatog provided players with a defined metagame, an unknown format awaited them on the second day of the National Championship: *Odyssey* block Booster Draft. This was the first premier event held where all three expansions in the block—*Odyssey, Torment,* and *Judgment*—were available. Adding a new expansion to a Limited environment usually throws even experienced players for a loop, and Saturday was no exception. In fact, many pro players did much worse than expected, throwing the standings upside down. At the end of the first day, the top slots were filled with name players. Morita was third, not having dropped a game; Kazuyuki Momose and Itaru Ishida of Panzer Hunter fame were in a strong position at 5-1 (seventh and twelfth place, respectively); 1999 National Champion Masayuki Higashino was in fourteenth place, and 2000 Japanese national team member Tsuyoshi Ikeda was in nineteenth place. Expectations were high that these experienced players would stay at or rise to the top during Day 2. However, the only one who did was Higashino. It may have been that less-experienced players had fewer preconceived notions about the format, and were therefore more easily able to adapt to the new cards.

Spectators were especially surprised to see Morita's name missing from the list of Top 8 competitors. Regarded as one of the best drafters in Japan, Morita has placed in the Top 8 of every Limited-format Grand Prix event he has played in, and with teammates Katsuhiro Mori and Masashiro Kuroda, he had won his first title at Grand Prix–Nagoya but a few weeks before. Everyone was betting on him to ride the wave of that victory to a spot on the 2002 national team. Going undefeated in Standard put him in good position for a run to the Top 8, but Morita was only able to post a 3-2-1 record during the draft.

Although it may seem as though this is focusing on the poor performance of pros, looking at the day's results another way, it could also be said that good players waiting for their big breaks found their chances and ran with them. It's one of the rules of professional **Magic** that there are always more pros to be discovered, waiting for just the right moment to pull themselves up into the upper echelon of players. This author would like to think that the results of this year's National Championship show that the overall level of play in Japan has increased. With several Grand Prix events and a yearly Pro Tour stop, there are more and more opportunities for Japanese players to test their skill at high-level events, and they got their chance to show the results this weekend.

The Tragedy of the Second Tiebreaker

As always, the fight for Top 8 was heated. Only two players, Mitsuya and Onoda, were able to get in from the 9-3 line. There was an intense struggle between the players below them, which had to be resolved by tiebreakers. While standings being determined by tiebreakers is nothing new, this year's Nationals gave rise to a situation not often seen.

Onoda—who has inherited the title of "High School Pro Player" from Ishida—squeaked in at eighth place, while 2001 Rookie of the Year Katsuhiro Mori was left to curse his luck in ninth place. Their opponent match win percentage was identical, down to the last decimal place. In the end, their rankings were determined by the second tiebreaker, game win percentage, which was only two-thousandths of a percent apart.

What made the competition even more intense is that at Nationals two years ago, Mori and Onoda performed another dance, this time in the Top 8, to see who could claim the title of "#1 High School Player". Onoda won that time, in a monoblue mirror match, to claim that title and a spot on the national team. Not one who easily gives up, Mori proceeded to prove himself on the international stage by claiming the Rookie of the Year title. This year, people were expecting the more experienced Mori to make the Top 8 and maybe even take the trophy, but instead, he had to watch from the sidelines as Onoda fought his way to the Finals. Clearly, the rivalry between these two players is not over, and we can only look forward to what they do next.

Kazuhiko Mitsuya

- Psychatog -

4	Nightscape Familiar
4	Psychatog
3	Circular Logic
4	Counterspell
2	Deep Analysis
1	Engineered Plague
4	Fact or Fiction
4	Force Spike
1	Mana Short
3	Memory Lapse
4	Repulse
2	Upheaval
2	Ancient Spring
2	Cephalid Coliseum
2	Darkwater Catacombs
9	Island
1	Salt Marsh
1	Sulfur Vent
3	Swamp
4	Underground River

sideboard

1	Deep Analysis
3	Duress
1	Engineered Plague
2	Gainsay
3	Ghastly Demise
1	Gloomdrifter
1	Haunting Echoes
1	Mana Short
2	Slay

Finals: Mitsuya vs. Onoda

In the end, it came down to Kazuhiko Mitsuya of Hachiouji playing Psychatog, versus Michihisa Onoda of Okayama playing black-white "Noir" control.

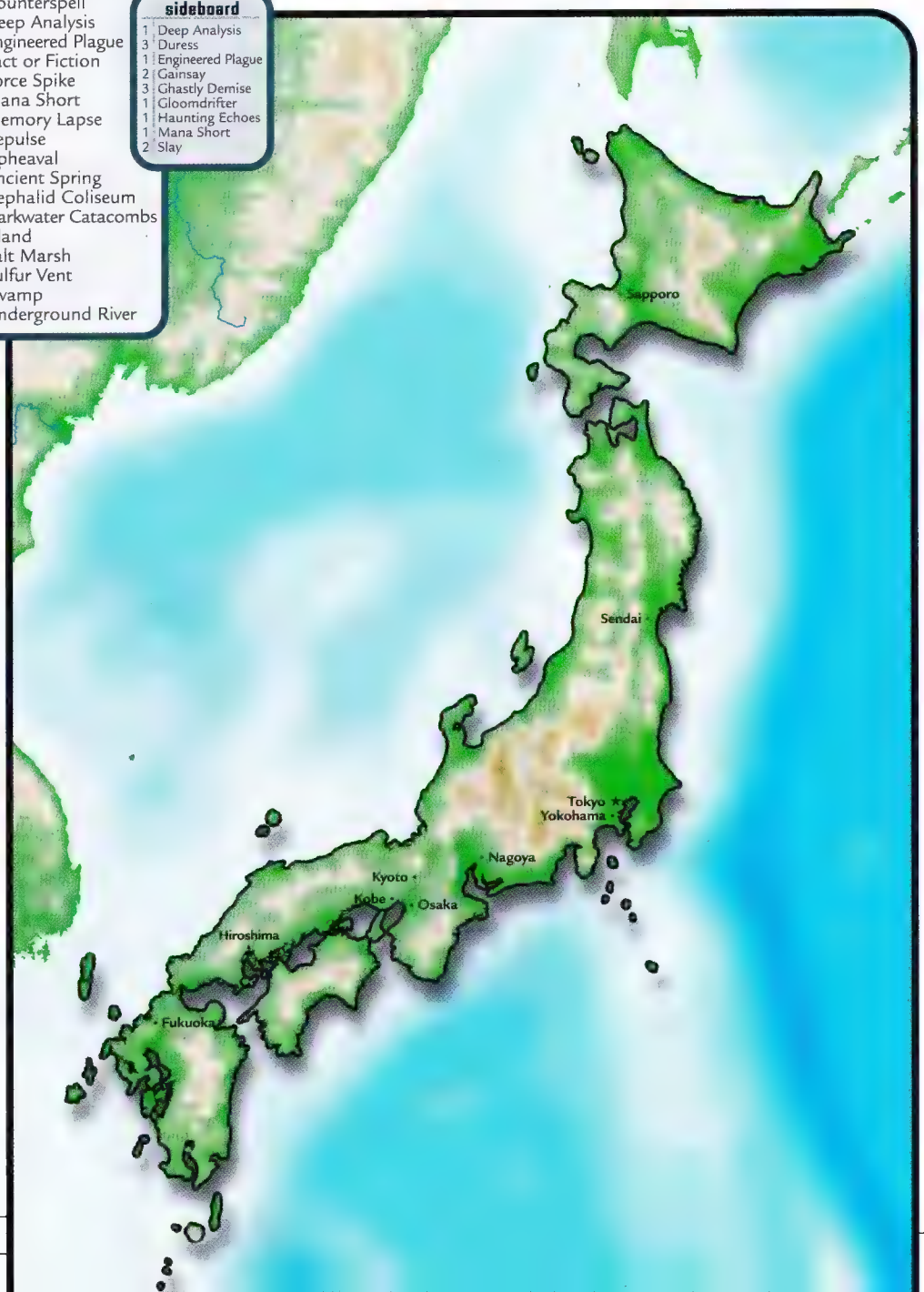
Looking back on the final match, it is clear that the title was Mitsuya's. In the first game, he came back from a disadvantage to pull out a victory after Onoda's deck ran out of steam. Spectators, who had already decided in their minds that Onoda had the better odds in the matchup, were visibly surprised to see Mitsuya take the first game.

Not willing to go down without a fight, Onoda was merciless in the second game, hitting Mitsuya with Duress and Gerrard's Verdict before playing a fourth-turn Braids, Cabal Minion. However, Mitsuya refused to give up, and was able to stabilize when Onoda failed to draw more land. A painful game of mutual attrition continued for a few turns, with Onoda blinking first, sacrificing Braids to retain a land. His attempts to rebuild were foiled by Mitsuya's Force Spike. Mitsuya then tried to take tempo back with a Psychatog. It looked like Onoda would make a comeback with multiple Ichorids, but Mitsuya put a stop to that with an Engineered Plague, eventually winning to take a 2-0 advantage. Onoda, the initial favorite, quickly became the underdog.

Not wanting to give up the trophy without a fight, Onoda managed to take the next two games to the applause of spectators. At this point, it was apparent that both the players as well as the observers had forgotten about the fact that a trophy and cash prize were on the line—what everyone was most interested in was who would win. Everyone knew that they were watching a great match of **Magic**, and everything else faded away. The players complemented each other on good plays, and the crowd was following every move, reacting to plays and gasping at miraculous topdecking.

The last game turned into a simple boxing match, with both players dumping their hands quickly and turning their creatures sideways at each other. In the end, however, Onoda's creatures went down one by one to Mitsuya's Psychatog.

Flush with victory over his first title—and what a title it was—when asked what he planned to do with his prize money, Mitsuya, a graduate student in chemistry, replied "Pay off my student loans."



Canadian Nationals

Red-Blue in the Great White North

by Josh Bennett

Canada has the distinction of being the only country to break the United States's stranglehold on the team portion of World Championships. After the European nations turned up some powerhouse teams this year, eyes turned to Canada to see if their best would rise to the occasion and claim a second title for their country.

The tournament began with a lower-than-usual level of star power. With Ryan Fuller serving his DCI suspension and Gary Wise having emigrated to England, Canada has lost its two biggest names. Many others, like Michael Gurney, Jay Elarar, and Terry Lau, decided not to make the trip, and two-time National Champion Gary Krakower missed qualifying on rating and then failed to grind in. But it wasn't as if Joe Average could waltz straight into Sunday. In addition to Canada's strong contingent of on-again, off-again pros, Pro Tour mainstays such as Jeff Cunningham, Matt Vienneau, Gab Tsang, and Terry Tsang were on hand to muscle out those hoping for a breakout performance.

The Standard Constructed grinders the night before heralded the metagame shift that was taking place. At U.S. Nationals, players heeded the Word of Budde and played Psychatog in droves. Only Eugene Harvey's Opposition, the perfect weapon, kept it out of first place. That wasn't the case in Japan, where it finished first, second, and third.

The Canadians saw the raw power of Psychatog and trembled. The response was immediate. Quebec led the charge, with over ten players running a hate-filled version of red-green. Many more followed suit. Others took up the banner of "Squirrel-Opposition", hoping to follow in Harvey's footsteps. The last front against the tide of Psychatog was sparked by deckbuilder Brian Kibler, who debuted a red-white-blue aggro deck on *Sideboard* Online just days before the tournament. Called "Miss America", it was an updated version of the old *Invasion* Block Constructed deck. Players liked what they saw and ran with it. Those four decks made up most of the field, but there was a little bit of everything being tried out.

Ninety-four players turned out to accept their invitations. Topping the standings at the end of Day 1 was David Rood, the Quebec sensation who's been lurking near the top of standings at North American Grand Prix events. His red-green machine smashed the field, 6-0. Quebec was also well represented by Louis Boileau, who finished the day in seventh place and has been quietly amassing strong finishes.

In a striking mix of 1998 talent and 2002 technology, both Jeff Fung and Pete Radonjic finished Day 1 with a 5-1 record, playing Miss America. The two have been friendly rivals for some time, playing together in Vancouver, a crucible for some of Canada's best talent. They even squared off in the second round, with Fung's triple-Lightning Angel draw leaving Radonjic sputtering in disbelief. After that match, Radonjic managed to shelve his bile and draw even with Fung by the day's close. They would meet again in round nine, only to intentionally draw into separate pods for the final draft.

Former Canadian national team member Sam Lau shared the 5-0-1 spot with Kyle Hadfield, whose short career already includes a Top 32 finish at Pro Tour-Nice. Rounding out the 5-1's were amateur David Sonnenberg and Jürgen Hahn. Other former national team members were not so lucky. Gab Tsang and Elijah Pollock went 3-3 and 2-4 respectively, playing an experimental blue-black-red Psychatog build that splashed for Flametongue Kavu, Fire/Ice, and sideboard goodies like Pyroclasm and Terminate. Grand Prix-Milwaukee Top 8 finisher Steve Cassel and human tempest Mark Zajdner took the same deck to a respectable 4-2.

The pros had their work cut out for them. Cunnigham sat at a comfortable 4-1-1, and Vienneau found himself at 4-2. Joining Gab Tsang at 3-3, though, were the Evans brothers, Murray "The Mauler" and Forrest, as well as Terry Tsang. They would need to find their drafting pants in a hurry if they were to make the final tables.

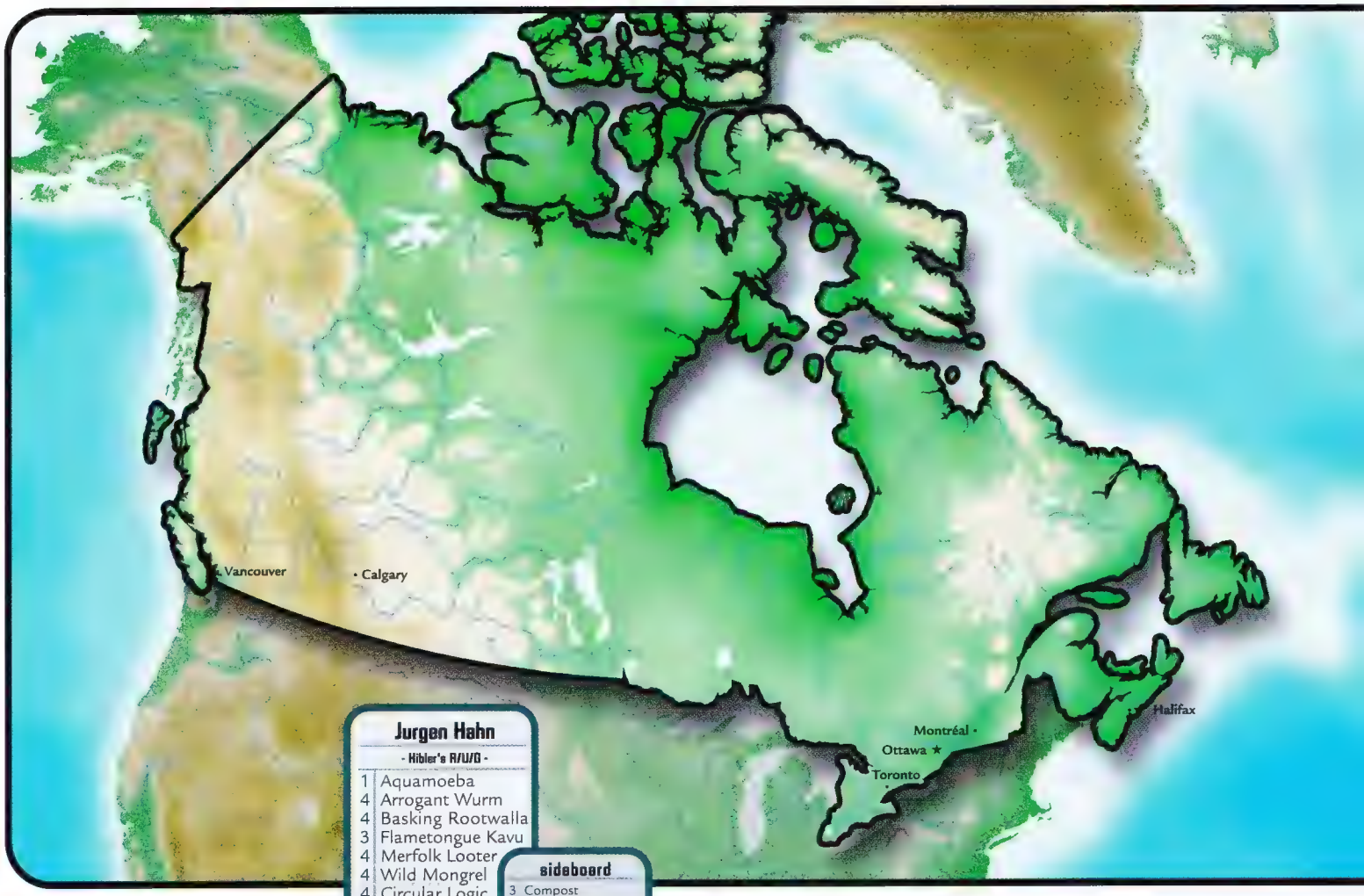
As Day 2 began, it was still very much anyone's game. The relatively young *Odyssey-Torment-Judgment* Booster Draft format would favor the prepared. Conveniently, the *Judgment* set had just been implemented on ***Magic*** *Online,* giving many pros the chance to do lots of testing with the best, regardless of location. Statistics from the first draft showed that the old preferences were in effect. Blue-white, green-red, and green-black were the most-drafted color combinations. Gab Tsang and Terry Tsang each won their first round and found themselves opposite each other in round eight. Terry was about to take the match, but scooped up his cards instead, saying that Gab had a better chance of winning out than he did. Gab did not disappoint, defeating Ben Raymond in round nine. Jürgen Hahn, Richard Hoaen, and Jon Stern also showed their 3-0 stuff.

Gab Tsang's eleventh round opponent was a plucky easterner named Nick Page. Page's mana stumbles in their three games were counterbalanced by his early Wild Mongrel in each of them. Tsang practically fell over in his chair when the Mongrel came out in the third game. His five-land opener flooded him, and Page eliminated him from Top 8 contention. Page himself was ousted in the final round by Jon Stern, a feat that put Stern at 6-0 on the day and made up for his mediocre 3-3 Day 1. The final note to this drama is that after conceding to Gab Tsang, Terry Tsang won his next four matches, finishing higher in the standings after Gab lost in the twelfth round.

Rood, Hahn, Cunningham, and Weiss had no trouble getting to the point where they could all draw into the Top 8, but the rest was determined through playing. Kyle Hadfield's Day 2 did not complement his 5-0-1 Day 1 performance, and he was already out of contention when he had to play Hoaen. He took it to three games, but Hoaen's dreams would not be crushed. Similarly, Jeff Fung had stacked up too many in the "L" column before facing Sam Lau in round twelve. Disheartened and not playing his best, he was put out of his misery in two quick games. The last was Boyd Hardie versus Jason Howden, and after claiming his spot on Sunday, Hardie strode out of the Feature Match Area and into side events, where he enjoyed a celebratory "WOOOOOO!" while twirling his shirt overhead.

Sunday started all too early for the competitors. Bleary-eyed, they took their positions. There were few spectators. In an hour, competitors in the Team Grand Prix Trial would come and gawk, but the quarters would be held in silence that complemented the severity of the players.

Hardie's "Ceta-Storm" red-green deck faced Rood's dedicated beatdown. Hardie's bombast of the day before was replaced with grim resolution, and even Rood showed less cockiness than usual. However, between Hardie's extra pain lands and a three-drop that didn't affect the board right away, it was a steal of a match for Rood. It didn't hurt that Hardie mulliganed in every



Jurgen Hahn
- Hibler's R/U/G -

1	Aquamoeba
4	Arrogant Wurm
4	Basking Rootwalla
3	Flametongue Kavu
4	Merfolk Looter
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Circular Logic
3	Fiery Temper
4	Fire/Ice
2	Repulse
3	Violent Eruption
3	Forest
5	Island
2	Karplusan Forest
2	Mossfire Valley
5	Mountain
3	Shivan Reef
4	Yavimaya Coast

sideboard

3	Compost
3	Gainsay
3	Hull Breach
3	Nantuko Blightcutter
3	Roar of the Wurm

game. Rood took it in three straight. They were done before most of the matches had finished their first game.

The only match keeping pace was Jon Stern versus Richard Hoaen. Stern's speedy red-green with sideboarded Hull Breaches meant that Hoaen and his Opposition deck barely had time to pretend to put up a defense. Hoaen went down in three straight as well. Cunningham's "JSS Red-Green" versus Hahn's "Regionals-Style Red-Blue-Green Madness" was similarly lopsided. Cunningham managed to steal a win in game three when Hahn's mana base left him without green mana and Cunningham's curve denied him time to find it, but Hahn's late-game potential made this match no-contest.

The last match to finish took an age, but the outcome was never in doubt. The experience of "Superman" Sam Lau may have given him an advantage over the jittery Ray Weiss, but the matchup was a nightmare for him and his by-the-book Psychatog deck. Weiss was with Opposition, and it performed as it did at U.S. Nationals, taking the match in three plodding games.

The Stern-Rood semifinal seemed to favor Rood, as Stern's deck had Llanowar Elves, Birds of Paradise, and City of Brass. Rood took the first two games quickly, then lost the race to find Meteor Storm in the third and misplayed to lose the fourth. It wound up costing him the match, as Stern's Shivan Wurm outraced Rood's Meteor Storm.

Hahn versus Weiss in the other bracket was nowhere near as tense. Hahn's Fire/Ice and Violent Eruption made a mockery of Weiss's one-toughness army, and gave him overwhelming control over the Merfolk Looter situation. Between card advantage, removal, monsters, and countermagic, Hahn had all the bases covered. Hull Breach made it a sure thing.

So it was down to Hahn, with madness, versus Stern, with red-green. Stern took the first game quickly. In the second, his decision to let a Merfolk Looter live was paid back with Violent Eruptions and Arrogant Wurms. The third went to Hahn, who drew a mongrel after a drawn-out fight left the board clear. In the fourth, Hahn mulliganed to six. Stern went to five. He tried to make a game of it, but Hahn was a leg up and working his card advantage. Within minutes, Hahn was the 2002 Canadian National Champion. Hahn, a self-described "Marine Biologist", is known mostly for his acerbic wit and unflappable demeanor, but he is also one of Canada's best unsung talents. Winning the Championship should herald great things to come for him.

The playoff for third place went the full five games. Weiss took it in the end with Shivan Wurm, after Rood decided he couldn't spare room for Ensnaring Bridge because the long game belonged to Weiss. All was not lost for Rood, though—Hahn's personal commitments combined with the expense of traveling to the opposite end of the globe meant he'd rather sit at home, count his winnings, and cheer the team on from the other side of the coverage. His position passed down to Rood.

As it stands, the three who will fight for the red and white in Sydney are a raw bunch, pushed out of the limelight by the star-studded teams from other countries. But both Weiss and Stern have skills that can pay all kinds of bills, and Rood's rising stock is reminiscent of the Eugene Harvey of last year, before his monster Nationals performance put him in the public eye. Without a stable of deckbuilders to help them and with no reputation to speak of, they're hungry to show that they can handle the competition.

German Nationals

Retrospective from a German Champion

by Kai Budde—translated by Hanno Girke

Editor's Note - Instead of our usual style of event recap, we had five-time Pro Tour Champion Kai Budde author a report with his perspective on his German National-victory.

In early May, it was once again time to find a new German National Champion. Every year, German Nationals is one of the highlights of the season. There's not much as much money to be won as on the Pro Tour or at Worlds, but you always meet lots of players you haven't seen in a while. Stephan Valkyser, Gregor Wolly, and Dirk Baberowski didn't show up, but the rest of the bunch was there. Sok-Yong Lee again announced his retirement after the tournament, as did Gero Maier—the same procedure as every year.

I was really surprised to see Oliver Krebs. A couple of weeks before the tournament, Ollie suddenly appeared on IRC and began testing Standard. At Nationals, he only managed to finish in the top half of the field, but I'm sure he'll give it another try at the European Championships. Some other "old-timers" also playing: Peer Kröger, Frank Adler, and Markus Bell.

German Nationals came directly after Pro Tour–Nice, and luckily both shared one of the same formats: Booster Draft. That meant that all I had to prepare for Nationals was Standard, as I still felt pretty comfortable with Limited after playing in several Grand Prix tournaments and doing fairly well during the Pro Tour. I spent the Easter holiday in Cologne, so I was able to test with Felix Schneiders, Simon Hockwin, and Roman Weidemann. There were even two smaller tournaments, one in Dülmen and one in Mönchengladbach. I played Thomas Refsdal's green-blue madness deck in the first tournament, going 6-1. My only loss was against Holger Althues with "Trenches", who also won the tournament, going 7-0. The next day, I played Psychatog for 5-0-1. I already liked the deck, but after that tournament I took a break from Standard to prepare for Pro Tour–Nice.

My personal highlight at Nice was the first draft on Day 2. The first booster gave me Kamahl, Pit Fighter. The second booster didn't start off as well. Third pick Diligent Farmhand didn't make me too happy, but my forth pick was . . . a second Kamahl. The deck turned out really silly, but I went 4-0. Three draws later, I was in the Top 8. No luck for me there—Bram Snepvangers mowed me down 3-0. The same happened to Sweden's Anton Jonsson—drawing poorly against a bad deck and losing. We had no interest in sightseeing, so we sat down and worked on a version of Psychatog. We both tried to get rid of Standstill. First, we tried Deep Analysis, but we decided it wasn't good enough against aggressive decks. More than that, we didn't want eight bounce spells. We thought that most players would play Psychatog or Trenches, and in those matchups, the card just isn't good enough. Next, we tried Force Spike. Late in the game, though, Force Spike is pretty worthless, and that called for Probe, to draw cards. Both Anton and I consider ourselves fans of that card. "Blümchen" (Marco Blume) interfered at that point, insisting we had to go for dinner, and any further deck building ideas were lost. A couple of days later (shortly before German Nationals), I talked it over with Anton on IRC and discovered that we had both stayed with the main deck we had put together in Nice. After a short sideboard comparison, we went off to our respective Nationals.

We took the train, as we had done for the Grand Prix. This time, we had a bowling team sitting next to us. While we got some boosters out of our backpacks to play a fast draft, they had a 64 oz. bottle of Kleiner Feigling (a sweet fig liquor) on the table. With all the toasts, they managed to get drunk pretty quickly, much to our amusement. The draft gave me a hopeful feeling about Nationals, as I got not only four Dirty Wererats, but also a Balshan Collaborator and two Faceless Butchers. Yes, I definitely had fun on that trip.

When we arrived at the Hotel Perkeo, Rene Pech and I found out that instead of two single beds, they had only one twin-sized bed for the two of us. Not exactly what we had planned, but we got that fixed pretty soon, and at about 6 P.M. we arrived at the city hall, met most of the qualified players, and registered for the tournament. Lots of good news—Dennis Johannsen, Björn Scheputtat, and Roman Weidemann had all had won meatgrinders to qualify at the last minute. Before we left for dinner, I chatted with the old Champion and some players from Cologne about the sideboard for Psychatog, which all of us had decided to play. That conversation didn't turn up anything new for me, so I mainly stuck to the 75 cards I had put aside before.

In Nice, I mainly ate mediocre pizza, so it was a relief to get good south German specialties for dinner. Going to bed and getting some sleep wasn't that easy, though, as our hotel was in the Altstadt quarter, and the windows of our room faced a street full of pubs. So we were able to enjoy merrily singing drunken people until 4 A.M., but who needs sleep? We decided that sleep was overrated anyways . . . When we arrived at city hall the next morning for the tournament, the bad news was that the air conditioning was out of service, and not only temporarily. The room temperature was in the upper 80s, but we couldn't do anything but try to cope with it.

My first draft table featured Michael Müller, Oliver Braun, Jens Krause, Danny Ecker, and my roommate, Rene Pech. Luckily for me, none of the three players

drafting before me took any blue cards, so it was up to me to collect them. My deck was relatively good. I had some problems in one game of the draft finals against Alexander Brodner, but the other two matches were just fine. After the first draft, many players from Hamburg were 3-0, but nearly all of them were placed at table 2, while I was at table 1. This time, the draft didn't work out that well. I couldn't take any blue cards, as Torben Twiefel pulled them out the boosters before I could do it. Finally, I had a solid black-white deck with two green cards. The first two matches were easy, but I had no chance against Stefan Heumann in round 6, and he trampled over me 2-0.

Hai Budde

- Psychatog -

4	Nightscape Familiar
4	Psychatog
3	Circular Logic
4	Counterspell
4	Fact or Fiction
4	Force Spike
3	Memory Lapse
3	Probe
4	Repulse
2	Upheaval
1	Cephalid Coliseum
1	Darkwater Catacombs
11	Island
4	Salt Marsh
4	Swamp
4	Underground River

sideboard

3	Deep Analysis
4	Duress
4	Ghastly Demise
1	Possessed Aven
1	Skeletal Scrying
2	Slay

Going 5-1 was fine by me, though. Rene Pech was also 5-1, so we were both in really good moods after Day 1. Nearly all of the Hamburg players had good scores. Dennis Johannsen, after winning a Limited meatgrinder 6-0 to qualify, surprised the field with a perfect 6-0 in the draft. Robert Will went 5-1, and in with the many 4-2 players were Patrick Mello, Marco Blume, Sascha Deinert, and Gunnar Refsdal.

The biggest surprise of Saturday was Robert Will. In the last two years, he had played in exactly two Constructed tournaments: the Regionals of Schleswig-Holstein. After winning Regionals this year, he led the post-round 10 standings after a 4-0 start with his green-blue madness deck. Unfortunately, I played one creature too many in my second game versus Andreas Kruschel and was unable to find the next Psychatog after his Wrath of God. The third game he managed to get Goblin Trenches through, and I didn't find Upheaval and lost. But my other three matches went fine, and I was 8-2. One more victory in the last two rounds, and I would be able to play on Sunday. My next opponent was . . . Robert Will. This was as good as a bye for me, as Robert at 9-1 was already qualified for the Top 8. Robert is a nice guy and didn't block my way into the final day. Even nicer, he lost again to Gunnar Refsdal in round 12, so Gunnar and I crowned him "nicest Hamburg player of the day". My last match was a laid-back draw with Dirk Roth, and this ended the day.

Sunday morning started with a thrilling Psychatog mirror match versus Falk for me. I expected a three-game match that would take at least 90 minutes, but Falk's deck decided to go on strike. It just refused to work. You could say that in the first he drew nothing but lands, and in the second, nearly no lands. So the match didn't take long, and I could watch on the big screen to see how Dirk Roth managed to squeeze out a victory against Gunnar Refsdal. Felix Schneiders won his match with Robert Will, so it was the Psychatog mirror again for the semifinals.

Will continued to be a nice guy, "donating" one of his Circular Logics to Felix. Schneiders liked it so much that he left the card in his deck and found out about it when he drew it after a mulligan in game 1. That was an easy 1-0 for me. After that, we both won one, and I reached the finals. Mark Ziegner waited for me with a monored ego-shooter. But he couldn't get past the "Endgegner", as one of the commentators called me, and I won the match 2-1 due to Upheaval/Psychatog in the third game.

And suddenly, I was German National Champion! I really have won some tournaments so far, but this was something completely different than being a Grand Prix winner. Mark, Felix, and I will do our very best to lead Germany to the Worlds team title. As the German soccer team was unable to claim the title, the task is now in our hands.

Brucker Conquers Europe

Psychatog over "Deep Dog" in the Finals

by Rui Oliveira

David Brucker was so far into what we call "the zone" that he didn't even notice it was over. Christophe Haim dropped his useless Gainsay, which couldn't possibly stop Brucker's game-winning Ghastly Demise, onto the table to concede, and Brucker immediately tapped mana to play Memory Lapse. As the other people on stage smiled, he finally figured out that his opponent was conceding.

It all started on a sunny Friday in the Netherlands. Representatives of more than 30 countries walked into the Amsterdam hall ready for two drafts of exploration. Despite the recent premier events that have included *Odyssey-Torment-Judgment* Booster Draft, few people in the world have mastered it, and with the ***Magic*** *Online* beta-test period ending, most had trouble preparing correctly.

The first draft should have been a formality for most top players, but several of them were in for a nasty surprise. The superstitious among you can guess the number of the problem table—thirteen—but check out the eight drafters who had to battle it out: Tommi Hovi, Tomi Walamies, Benedikt Klauser, Anze Avsec, Dirk Baberowski, Benjamin Caumes, Nicolai Herzog, and Olle Rade. That table had just about everything you could wish for: an Invitational winner (Rade), a former European Champion (Herzog), a Masters Series winner (Baberowksi), and four Pro Tour wins (Hovi and Baberowski).

After a bit of a mix-up with the new stamping system, which didn't dry fast enough, the drafts got underway. The fight for the top table raged on for the rest of the day. Seven rounds and a second draft later, three players left the building unscathed: veteran French star Raphael Levy, Germany's Roland Bode, and Dutchman Victor van den Broek.

All of them finished the 7 rounds on Day 1 with the maximum 21 points. Since the tournament had 14 rounds total, 11 wins (33 points) would be enough to play on Sunday, so these 3 players "only" needed to go 4-3 on the second day. Three points behind them was a huge pack of players led by Pro Tour–Nice finalist Bram Snepvangers, former European Champion Noah Boeken, Svend Geertsen, Amiel Tenenbaum, and Anton Jonsson.

A few big European names found themselves at the other end of the spectrum. Marco Blume, Frederico Bastos, Jens Thorén, Benedikt Klauser, and Rafaelle Lo Moro were just a few of the names near the bottom of the standings that everyone expected to see way higher.

On the second day, van den Broek proved that home court advantage has some meaning in **Magic**. The advantage of sleeping on his own bed and having his parents and friends cheering from the sidelines probably had something to do with Victor being the last undefeated player. He finally stumbled in round 10, losing to Sweden's National Champion and two-time Pro Tour Top 8 finisher, Anton Jonsson.

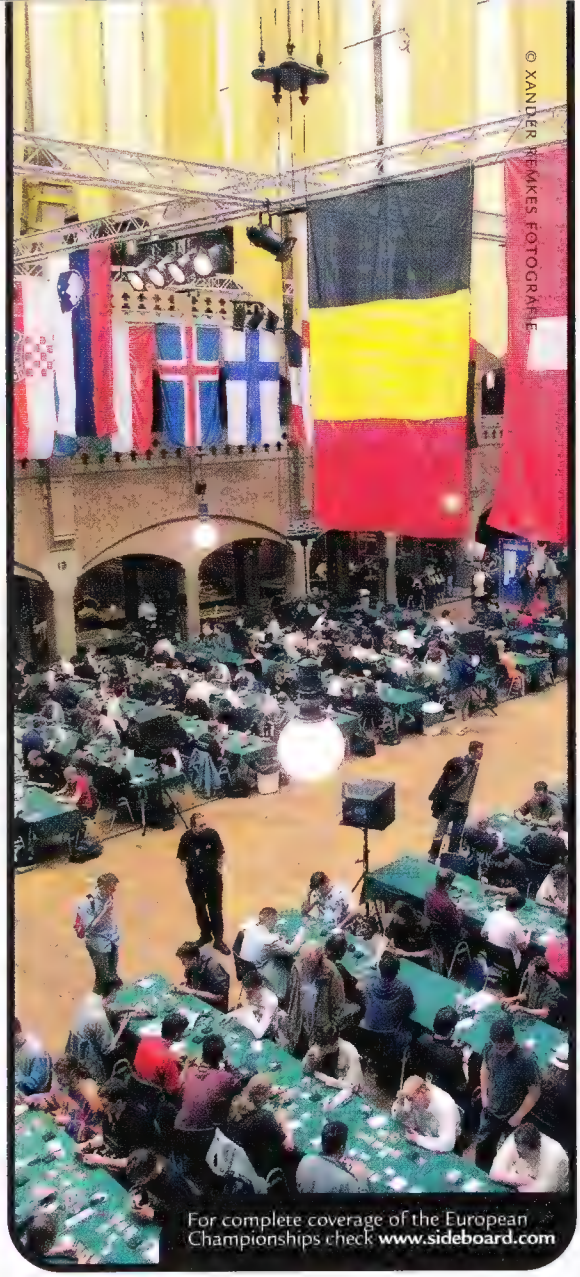
By then, we had a clearer picture of the standings. Some players knew they were only fighting to finish in the money, while others still had the Top 8 within their grasp. Levy, for example, was having a terrible day. From 1st place in the standings, he fell all the way to 34th, finishing Day 2 with only 2 wins.

It also became clear that there was nothing really new deck-wise. Most players and teams had cut down on Standard testing, especially because the card pool was about to change. The English played black-white control, Team Punisher reworked blue-white-red, calling it "Mr. Finland", and a few decklists sported minor changes intended to deal with the expected metagame.

With one round to go, four players where already locked in for Sunday. Topping the standings was rising French star Amiel Tenenbaum. Following him were Roland Bode and Denmark's pride and joy, Svend Geertsen. The group of guaranteed Top 8 players was rounded out by a very young Italian, Marco Lombardi, who reaped the rewards of picking the right deck for the second day. Throughout the day, Marco never regretted playing "Trenches" for the last tournament with this Standard card pool, as he notched win after win. He was in fifteenth place going into Day 2, and six rounds later he had secured his spot in the Top 8.

Players from 30 countries came to Amsterdam to compete at the European Championships.

ALEXANDER REMKES FOTOGRAFIE



MAGIC The Gathering® EUROPEAN™ CHAMPIONSHIP

After two days of solid play, it's always hard to sit down for the last round knowing you need to win to make the final cut. Of the five tables playing for a spot in the Top 8, two pairings were particularly painful: Olivier Ruel versus Christophe Haim and Victor van den Broek versus Jeroen Remie.

At both tables, the players seemed unwilling to start their matches, still shaken by the unlucky pairings. Not only were they playing against countrymen, they were also playing against friends. In the end, van den Broek snuck past Remie, and Ruel was crushed by mana problems in a very fast third game. For Haim and van den Broek, the thrill of the Top 8 was tainted by the bitter taste of cutting out a friend.

At the other tables, Anton Jonsson and David Brucker got past their opponents. They were spared the lottery of tiebreakers by a draw at the last table that could get someone the points for the Top 8.

As the list came out, there was another surprise. With no Norwegian in the Top 8—their best finish was courtesy of Haakon Monsen in 46th place—and only one Dutchman, it seemed likely that a different nation would win for a change. So far, three of the four titles had gone to Norway, with Noah Boeken taking the remaining one for the Netherlands two years ago.

The Top 8 pairings dictated yet another all-French war for Christophe Haim in the quarterfinals. This time, he would play against Amiel Tenenbaum. Both were playing similar green-blue-red madness decks, although Tenenbaum's had some unorthodox card choices. They were certainly happy about their results so far and had some good laughs during their match. In the end, powered by his good luck charm—believe it or not, a boiled egg—Christophe finished the match in style—double Violent Eruption and Mongrel for the semifinal slot.

The pairings weren't friendly to the lone Nordic representative either. Anton Jonsson's Mr. Finland deck had to face David Brucker's Psychatog. Throughout the weekend, Team Punisher repeated that Psychatog was their worst match-up. As you already know, Brucker won the match despite Jonsson's best efforts. Once again, the Swede reached the Top 8 only to fall in the first battle.

Meanwhile, on center stage and with the cameras on them, the only Dutchman, van den Broek, took on Denmark's Svend Geertsen. This match, perhaps because it was on camera, got the crowd going. The Dutch contingent was obviously out in strength to back Victor, but Geertsen found some unlikely supporters among the many French waiting for the Haim-Tenenbaum match.

In the end, Geertsen's green-blue madness deck could do little to resist van den Broek's green-red beatdown. As soon as the ground got clogged up, van den Broek turned his burn to Svend's dome. In his first Top 8 match at a premier event, the Dutchman showed no mercy to the Pro Tour veteran, finishing things in three games.

At the last table, Lombardi fought a hard battle against Roland Bode's green-red deck. In a fervor of national pride, Bode had named his deck "Germany 1:0 Brazil", hoping to give Germany good luck in both battles. Sadly for him, the quarterfinals belonged to Italy. Despite his young age, Lombardi kept his cool, even when he was down two games to one. He let his deck do the talking in the last two games—helped in the last by Bode's mana screw—and managed to turn the match around.

The semifinals saw Haim matched against Lombardi and Brucker pitted against van den Broek. At the first table, Haim managed to draw a perfect balance from his deck, keeping Lombardi in trouble with his creatures and coming up with just enough counters to stop the big threats.

The other semifinal match started off slowly and a bit dully for the crowd, but the last game was pure energy. Down 2-1 and with the fourth game slipping out of his grasp, Victor van den Broek tried to perform miracles, but Brucker kept finding answers, coolly putting an end to the Dutchman's brave attempts. During the whole weekend, van den Broek only lost four matches, all of them to players in the Top 8—David Brucker, Anton Jonsson, Marco Lombardi, and Amiel Tenenbaum.

During the semifinals, we had a break so that the crowd could watch the football World Cup finals. It was a chance to see the Germans show some emotion for once, especially when their amazing keeper, Oliver Kahn, let them down. A big football fan himself, David Brucker came back into the Top 8 area to finish off the match and get ready for the finals.

Across the table from Brucker sat Christophe Haim. After almost three days of **Magic**, they had reached the European summit. If Brucker was feeling nervous, his mood certainly didn't improve when Kai Budde walked up to stage to help with the coverage. Having your National Champion (and the best player in the world) looking over your shoulder, analyzing every play you make, and writing about the biggest match in your life in your own language must be a lot of pressure.

Still, during the four games of the finals, the competitors were in another world. The murmur of the crowd and the cameras didn't seem to affect them. Dressed in black, which must have turned the TV lights into torture, David Brucker played the whole Top 8 like the man looking over his shoulder, Kai Budde. He was calm, polite, focused, and above all, merciless.

Haim was a wall of silence. With a constant scowl of concentration, he kept battling on, even when mulligans threatened to drag him down. Brucker might be something of a mulligan magnet, since Haim was forced to mulligan in the first three games.

They hardly looked at or spoke to each other during the first games, totally focusing on their options. Only when the final game was firmly in Brucker's grasp did they start to relax. Christophe Haim had done his best but it had not been enough.

With a huge smile, David Brucker shook hands and received congratulations from the loud Germans. Amongst them was Christoph Lippert, who had made the crucial switch of taking Nightscape Familiar out of the Psychatog deck in favor of Chainer's Edict—a move that won Brucker several games over the weekend.

A few minutes later, Brucker received a big round of applause when he lifted his trophy. Crowned European Champion, he then faced his last challenge of the weekend: he had about twenty minutes to catch his train back home. With him went a large check to take him to Sydney and a great story to tell.

Top 8 Profiles

Six Countries, Eight Great Players

by Gary Wise

David Brucker

Twenty year-old student David Brucker didn't expect to find fame and glory at European Championships—he didn't even know he'd be attending. Finishing a term of civil service in Munich, Brucker didn't know if he'd have time to attend Euros. When time opened up a week before the event, he jumped at the chance to attend and made the most of it, taking home the title.

Recognized long before now by his countrymen as one of their nation's best, David's biggest international accomplishment before his Euros win was an appearance in the finals of the team competition at World Championships. With school and civil service taking from his travel time, he hasn't been able to attend all the Pro Tours he's been qualified for, but now that he's tasted this kind of success, one assumes that he'll make the time to attend in the future.

Christophe Haim

It's been a great year for Christophe Haim. His game has benefited from the constant exposure to **Magic** that resulted from his moving in with Masters Series competitor Franck Canu early in the year. He made his first Pro Tour Top 8 appearance in Osaka earlier this year before making the French national team and then the finals of European Championships.

Living in Paris, Christophe was making his living as a shoe salesman before his recent successes allowed him to concentrate full-time on **Magic**. Now, with money in his pocket, Haim is ready to join teammates Canu, Amiel Tenenbaum, and the Ruel brothers on the Grand Prix circuit. Christophe heads to Worlds still in contention for the Rookie of the Year prize.

Victor van den Broek

Despite his young age of 21, Victor van den Broek is as veteran as they come. He's written for and edited **Magic** websites, he's been answering technical questions on IRC for years, and he made his first Pro Tour appearance in 1998. In short, he's the kind of glue that holds the **Magic** community together. He's done this for years, despite seeing few rewards.

Recently though, the rewards have come piling in. First, there was his team www.starmaker.nl/lap (with Jelger Weigersma and Frank Karsten) making the semifinals of the Osaka Masters Series event, and now, he's managed his first international Top 8 with a semifinal appearance at Euros, which in turn earned him a longed-for invite to Worlds in Sydney. All good things come to those who wait.

Back: Svend Geertsen, David Brucker, Amiel Tenenbaum, Anton Jonsson
Front: Marco Lombardi, Roland Bode, Christophe Haim, Victor van den Broek

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Marco Lombardi

Sixteen is an important age—you learn to drive, you start dating more regularly, and, if you're Marco Lombardi, you make the semifinals of European Championships. Somewhat bewildered by his success in the biggest tournament in the lead-up to Worlds, the young Italian is now on his way to Sydney to prove his strong season hasn't been a fluke.

Lombardi's fourth place finish at Euros comes on the tail of a fifth place showing at Nationals, which was especially sweet in light of his ninth place Nationals finish a year ago. The second of four **Magic**-playing brothers, Marco already has a team of playtesters in place to help him as he prepares for Sydney.

Svend Geertsen

This is one member of this Top 8 you should have already heard of. Four times, the Dane has made the Top 8 of a Pro Tour, and now, after three close misses (9th, 11th, 12th), Geertsen can finally add a Euros Top 8 to his resume. At 21, the five-year veteran of the Pro Tour still has a lot of time left, even if **Magic** comes after studying kinesiology on his list of priorities.

Anton Jonsson

What a year! First a Top 8 finish at Pro Tour–New Orleans, then a National Championship win and a second Pro Tour Top 8 finish at Nice, and now a Sunday appearance at Euros. It's been a whirlwind ride for the 24 year-old member of Team Punisher. Hailing from Sweden, Jonsson plays **Magic** full-time, and if this season has been any indication, he's far from done winning.

Amiel Tenenbaum

Frenchman Amiel Tenenbaum has had a great season. Starting off with a second place finish at Pro Tour–New York as a member of Les Plus Class (with Nicolas Olivieri and Gabriel Nassif), Amiel has gone on to notch a number of money finishes over the year. The 20 year-old Parisian is very much in the running for this year's Rookie of the Year race, but regardless of whether he wins, one can be sure that we're only seeing the first of many strong finishes for him.

Roland Bode

Perhaps the most unknown quantity of this Top 8, 23 year-old Roland Bode of Germany quit **Magic** a few years ago but re-emerged with the release of *Invasion*. Finishing tenth this year at German Nationals, the student qualified for Euros on rating but didn't expect the success he found there. Now, he's on his way to Worlds, and if his 7-0 start at Euros is any indication, he could be poised to surprise a few more people with a strong showing in Sydney.

Top 8 Deck Analysis

Flashback, Madness, and Psychatog

by Kai Budde

David Brucker

Brucker built his deck with his playtest partner, Christoph Lippert. They took the deck that won Swedish and German Nationals and changed it so that it would have a better game against green-red beatdown. To make sure that the multiple burn spells those decks run wouldn't have many targets, they removed the Nightscape Familiars from the deck and added four Chainer's Edicts as additional creature removal. The Edicts are also great against green-blue madness strategies because they can kill the creature that is the most troublesome for this archetype: Merfolk Looter. It proved to be a good decision, as Brucker sailed through the Top 8, winning all of his matches 3-1.

David Brucker
- First Place -

4	Psychatog
4	Chainer's Edict
3	Circular Logic
4	Counterspell
1	Deep Analysis
1	Engineered Plague
4	Fact or Fiction
3	Force Spike
4	Memory Lapse
3	Probe
2	Repulse
2	Upheaval
1	Cephalid Coliseum
1	Darkwater Catacombs
10	Island
4	Salt Marsh
5	Swamp
4	Underground River

sideboard

2	Deep Analysis
4	Duress
2	Engineered Plague
4	Ghastly Demise
2	Plague Spitter
2	Possessed Aven

Marco Lombardi

Lombardi chose a deck that originated in the last Block Constructed season and was revived by Rob Nadebaum for this year's Australian Nationals. Not too many people paid attention then, but the deck came into the spotlight when Tomi Walamies used it to win Finnish Nationals. Lombardi's version varies little from those decks. He chose to run a third Goblin Trenches in the main deck to ensure that he wouldn't run out of win options against control decks, but other than that his deck is typical for this archetype.

Amiel Tenenbaum

"Un Deck De Malade"—"A Crazy Deck"—is what Tenenbaum called his deck. Crazy or not, it certainly has to be considered a rogue deck. Tenenbaum took the best green and blue cards and added the two most powerful red cards in the environment—Fire/Ice and Flametongue Kavu—to the mix. When asked for a comment, Tomi Walamies replied, "Unforeseen synergy." That sums it up quite well—several powerful cards that work well together. Amiel cruised to a 5-1-1 record in Standard with his creation before losing to his countryman, Haim.

Anton Jonsson
- Sixth Place -

4	Flametongue Kavu
4	Meddling Mage
2	Absorb
3	Aura Blast
4	Counterspell
2	Deep Analysis
4	Fact or Fiction
4	Fire/Ice
3	Goblin Trenches
4	Memory Lapse
4	Repulse
2	Adarkar Wastes
2	Battlefield Forge
1	Cephalid Coliseum
4	Coastal Tower
7	Island
3	Mountain
3	Shivan Reef
3	Skycloud Expanse

sideboard

1	Cephalid Coliseum
2	COP: Green
2	Deep Analysis
2	Gainsay
2	Lightning Angel
1	Rakavolver
2	Wrath of God

Anton Jonsson

The Scandinavian Team Punisher took Tomi Walamies's Trenches deck from Finnish Nationals and modified it for a more control-heavy field. They removed Wrath of God from the main deck and added Meddling Mage and Deep Analysis to fight slow decks. To improve the weakened matchup against aggro decks, four Flametongue Kavus were moved from the sideboard to the main deck.

Christophe Haim

Most of the well-known French players in the tournament ran a version of this deck, with varying results. Haim chose not to run Basking Rootwalla or Fiery Temper, which are usually staples in a deck with Wild Mongrel, Merfolk Looter, and Aquamoeba. He replaced them with Fire/Ice and Violent Eruption, both of which are amazing in the mirror or against "Squirrel/Opposition". Those rogue changes paid off big time for him as he went 6-1 in the Swiss and was stopped only by Brucker in the finals.

Christophe Haim
- Second Place -

4	Aquamoeba
3	Arrogant Wurm
4	Flametongue Kavu
4	Merfolk Looter
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Circular Logic
3	Deep Analysis
4	Fire/Ice
3	Roar of the Wurm
3	Violent Eruption
1	Forest
7	Island
2	Karplusan Forest
2	Mossfire Valley
2	Mountain
4	Shivan Oasis
2	Shivan Reef
4	Yavimaya Coast

sideboard

4	Gainsay
3	Hull Breach
1	Nantuko Blightcutter
1	Obliterate
1	Roar of the Wurm
2	Rushing River
2	Unnatural Selection
1	Violent Eruption

Victor van den Broek

After going 7-0 in the Draft, van den Broek needed a solid Standard deck to get him the 4-3 record he needed to play on Sunday. He was going to play Psychatog until friends told him to run a green-red beatdown deck that did well at Canadian Nationals. Designed by Louis Boileau, this deck doesn't run Reckless Charge and instead packs a huge amount of direct damage with Fiery Temper, Firebolt, Violent Eruption, and Meteor Storm. The goal is either to deal some early damage with creatures and use burn to finish the opponent off or to play a few quick guys and clear the way for them with the red spells.

Victor van den Broek
- Eighth Place -

4	Basking Rootwalla
4	Flametongue Kavu
4	Grim Lavamancer
1	Kavu Titan
4	Wild Mongrel
3	Yavimaya Barbarian
4	Call of the Herd
3	Fiery Temper
4	Firebolt
2	Meteor Storm
4	Violent Eruption
6	Forest
4	Karplusan Forest
1	Keldon Necropolis
4	Mossfire Valley
8	Mountain

sideboard

3	Engulfing Flames
2	Fires of Yavimaya
2	Jade Leech
2	Hull Breach
1	Meteor Storm
2	Nantuko Blightcutter
3	Shivan Wurm

Roland Bode

If you look at Bode's deck, it seems very similar to van den Broek's, but in reality, it's not. Overall, Bode's deck is cheaper and much more aggressive. While Victor has a plan for the long game with Call of the Herd and Meteor Storm, Roland's deck consists of two-mana creatures and burn. To make sure he can deal the final points, he has full sets of both Urza's Rage and Barbarian Ring.

Roland Bode
- Seventh Place -

4	Basking Rootwalla
4	Blurred Mongoose
3	Flametongue Kavu
4	Grim Lavamancer
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Yavimaya Barbarian
4	Fiery Temper
4	Firebolt
4	Urza's Rage
3	Violent Eruption
4	Barbarian Ring
6	Forest
4	Karplusan Forest
1	Keldon Necropolis
3	Mossfire Valley
4	Mountain

sideboard

2	Engulfing Flames
4	Ensnaring Bridge
1	Flametongue Kavu
3	Hull Breach
1	Meteor Storm
2	Shivan Wurm
1	Sudden Impact
1	Violent Eruption

Svend Geertsen

If you knew Geertsen, it would hardly surprise you that he showed up to this tournament without a Standard deck. He asked his friends for help, and they gave him a green-blue madness deck. The two cards that separate this version from the typical build are two main deck Bearscapes and two main deck Ghostly Wings, with more in the board. The Bearscapes are there to beat blue-based control, and the Ghostly Wings serve as additional bounce, a madness enabler, and an enhancer for the deck's beatdown creatures, providing evasion when needed. Svend started the Constructed day with a 4-0-2 record and drew his last round to reach the Top 8.

Red-Green Wins!

Juniors Battle for $100,000 in Scholarships

by Toby Wachter

When you think of Junior **Magic**, a few things may come to mind. Many quickly disregard the young competitors' abilities and stereotype Junior Super Series (JSS) players as unskilled kids who are content to play mindless beatdown decks. However, history shows that nothing could be further from the truth. If you take a look back at the players that once competed in Junior **Magic** tournaments, it becomes apparent that players who cut their teeth in the JSS are very likely to go on to more success. Jon Finkel, Kai Budde, Zvi Mowshowitz, Jeff Cunningham, Bob Maher, Steve O'Mahoney-Schwartz, and others all won scholarship money on the JSS circuit before they went on to earn even more money on the Pro Tour.

Every year, after many qualifier tournaments, players from all over congregate in Florida to play in the JSS Championship. U.S. Nationals occurs at the same time and in the same venue. On one hand, this provides younger players who have stars in their eyes and dreams of Pro Tour glory with a glimpse into what their future might hold. You might think this means that the juniors look up to the Nationals competitors, and while that may have been the case, a strange role-reversal has occurred. Standard is only a relevant format to pros for a few months out of the year, but it is the most important format to juniors all year long. As a result, many Nationals competitors actually asked juniors for advice and decklists before heading into the tournament. Ironically, it may have been the pros who learned from the juniors, and not vice-versa.

So what were the defining characteristics of the Standard format that the juniors knew so well? As had been the case since the San Diego Masters Series, Psychatog was "the deck to beat". A good deck either had to be well equipped to deal with the grinning, metagame-dominating creature or had to run the toothy monstrosity itself. Perhaps the most intriguing development leading into the tournament was the continued evolution of the Psychatog deck. When the deck first made its debut, it either contained many creatures, including Shadowmage Infiltrator and Merfolk Looter, or was packed with cantrips. After that, Zev Gurwitz created "Zevatog", which dominated the Standard metagame thanks to its aggressive bounce spells and Standstill, which would come down on a slanted board position to add more fuel to the engine. Prior to the JSS and U.S. National Championships, Kai Budde wrote an online article about a successful version of the Psychatog deck that had carried him and many other Europeans to Nationals success. The most important point the article made was that, in Budde's opinion, Standstill was not a good card in the deck. Well, when Kai talks, the rest of the world listens. Very few Standstills were hanging around Psychatogs in Nationals decks, and the same went for the decks in the JSS. Neither of the two Psychatog decks in the Top 8 ran the blue enchantment.

The day before the main tournament started, the Junior Open, or "Grinder", was held. All unqualified players were invited, and the Top 25 competitors would earn a spot in the Championship. More importantly, this tournament would help establish the metagame and perhaps reveal some interesting tech. Only 5 of the Top 25 players ran Psychatog. Out of those five decks, only one ran Standstill in the main deck, while another had it in the sideboard. Some other top Junior Open decks revealed some creative but effective deck technology. Two players ran decks that abused the madness mechanic through the use of Zombie Infestation. Max Cunningham's version was blue-green-black, and included most of the usual suspects: Merfolk Looter and Wild Mongrel to pitch cards like Basking Rootwalla and Arrogant Wurm. Unlike other versions of the deck, Cunningham splashed black for Duress and the aforementioned Infestation. Andrew Wagner's deck was different and much more aggressive. Using a black-red-green build, Wagner was able to abuse Violent Eruption and gain access to some of the environment's more potent yet overlooked spells such as Terminate and Spiritmonger.

Monoblack control also made a showing. Utilizing the power of Cabal Coffers to produce insane amounts of black mana in the late game, this deck was capable of abusing black's most devastating spells, including Corrupt, Haunting Echoes, and Mutilate, and it had Diabolic Tutor to fetch the best card for any situation. Matt Driscoll's version had a unique way to get around troublesome artifacts and enchantments: one Legacy Weapon and one Crystal Quarry. Thanks to Diabolic Tutor and Planar Portal, he

Back: Edward Solis, Ross Anderson, Alex Lecky, Andrew Buch
Front: Kush Patel, Michael Senger, Forrest Sallens, Adam Chambers

could search up the two-card combo and wipe out every permanent his opponent controlled, one by one. Another unique deck was Alex Hamilton's blue-white-green creation, which ran old-school control elements, such as Counterspell, Wrath of God, and Serra Angel, in addition to newer cards like Æther Burst, Meddling Mage, Mystic Enforcer, and even Gerrard Capashen. A bit rogue for sure, but Hamilton's strange build earned him a ninth place finish and a spot in the Championships.

Once the Grinder finished up it was time for the big tournament, as 331 young competitors squared off, each hoping to claim the title of best junior player in the world. After nine rounds of play, the Top 8 had earned the right to play in front of the cameras on Sunday, side by side with the Nationals Top 8. The quarterfinals saw the only two Psychatog decks paired up. The versions were nearly identical, except that Kush Patel's version ran Recoil where Alex Lecky's deck had Lobotomy. However, Patel had a better sideboard for the mirror match, bringing in Persecute and Possessed Aven, and took the match 3-1. Edward Solis's breakneck speed, low-curved green-red deck made short work of Forrest Sullens's green-blue threshold deck in a 3-0 slaughter that was only helped along by Sullens choosing to mulligan two of his opening hands.

In another quarterfinal match, Adam Chambers played a green-blue-red "Squirrel-Opposition" deck that was almost identical to the version Eugene Harvey carried to the U.S. National Championship. He took down Michael Senger's blue-green madness deck in a 3-1 match. In the last quarterfinal match, Ross Anderson's fast, aggressive, yet card advantage–capable green-blue-red deck defeated Andrew Buch in a 3-1 match. Buch also played green-blue-red, but his build was very different. He sought to maximize the power of madness cards such as Fiery Temper, Violent Eruption, and Circular Logic, while Anderson's deck simply played some of the best cards in the environment, like Call of the Herd, Fact or Fiction, and Upheaval.

After his dominating 3-0 performance in the quarterfinals, Solis had to be confident heading into his match against Kush Patel and his Psychatog deck. Low-curved red-green decks like Solis's are heavily favored against Psychatog due to their speed and ability to overwhelm the control player before he or she can slow the game to his or her pace. In the first game, Patel was able to stabilize and win. The second game was much more lopsided, as Solis was mana screwed while Patel used two copies of Fact or Fiction to build up his hand. From this position, Patel was able to play out the Upheaval/Psychatog combination, and went up 2-0 in what was supposed to be a bad matchup. Still, Solis's deck did what it was designed to do—in one game it crushed a mana screwed Patel, and in another, Solis simply burned the Psychatog player out to win the match in a closer-than-anticipated full five games.

The other semifinal match was a battle of green-blue-red decks. Even though Anderson and Chambers were playing the same colors, the goals of their decks were completely different. Chambers's Opposition deck sought to lock down the board, while Anderson's was more of a "good stuff" deck that also contained two copies of Upheaval—a fine "Plan B". The first game came down to a crucial play. Chambers pitched his hand to Wild Mongrel during a counterspell war so that Circular Logic would force a spell onto the table. However, Anderson had Memory Lapse! To make things even worse, Anderson untapped and played Standstill with superior board position, making the win a near-certainty. Fact or Fiction put Anderson over the top in game two, and even though he lost game three, he was able to take game four to win the match and move on to the finals.

With the cameras rolling and everyone in the venue watching, Edward Solis went up against Ross Anderson to determine the JSS Champion. The winner would walk away with $20,000 in scholarships, while the loser would still come home with $10,000. The action was fast-paced, as both speedy decks engaged in a war of attrition, with game-swinging tempo and card advantage spells being played all over. Flametongue Kavus, Repulses, and Call of the Herd–generated Elephant tokens traded back and forth, as Solis aimed to assault and burn out Anderson before Standstill and Fact or Fiction provided the card advantage necessary for him to gain control of the game. With a 2-1 game advantage and superior board position in game four, Solis took a gamble. He cast an Earthquake to wipe out every creature in play except for Anderson's Nimble Mongoose. This brought Anderson down to three life points and well within burn range, but he had the answer: Upheaval. The reset button turned the game around for Anderson, but Solis drew Urza's Rage just in time to take the match and the championship.

For the skeptics who may disregard the play skill or influence of the JSS, consider this: Solis came in second in his Regional tournament and played in Nationals, but used it simply as a warm-up tournament. While it may be a bit early to put him in the same league as former juniors who went on to Pro Tour glory, he already has the skills necessary to play with the big boys. Additionally, his victory shifted the pre-*Judgment* Standard metagame drastically. A few weeks after the JSS Championship, green-red made a strong showing at Canadian Nationals, thanks largely to Solis's run with the deck.

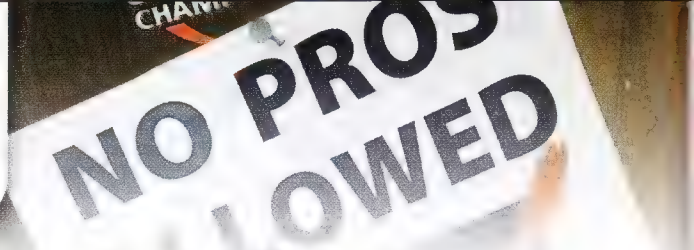
Even though many are quick to classify the JSS as a bunch of kids without much skill, evidence shows otherwise. In the case of rising stars like Solis, the skill to compete with the best is obviously present. The only thing lacking from the equation is experience, and the JSS provides that. This is where today's Pro Tour superstars learned the ropes, and many big-name players are sure to follow in their footsteps.

Edward Solis
- 2002 JSS Champion -

4	Basking Rootwalla
3	Flametongue Kavu
3	Grim Lavamancer
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Yavimaya Barbarian
4	Call of the Herd
4	Firebolt
4	Urza's Rage
3	Violent Eruption
4	Volcanic Hammer
7	Forest
4	Karplusan Forest
1	Keldon Necropolis
2	Mossfire Valley
9	Mountain

sideboard

3	Earthquake
1	Flametongue Kavu
4	Kavu Titan
1	Obliterate
3	Reckless Charge
3	Spellbane Centaur



Wood Wins Magic For Life

Monoblack Controls the Amateurs

by Mike Turian and Paul Sottosanti

Every **Magic** career needs a starting point. Thomas Wood's will be winning this year's Amateur Championships. Wood took a creatureless monoblack deck to an undefeated 10-0-2 record. For his efforts, he won a box of every **Magic** set to be released for life.

The finals saw Wood taking on Ben Sowards, who played an aggressive red-green deck that splashed white for Armadillo Cloak and Thornscape Apprentice. In the four-game final match, momentum swung back and forth as rapidly as the turns passed.

Game 1 saw Wood play Addle, mistakenly naming blue. Turns three and four went much better for him, as he played a Phyrexian Arena followed by Mutilate. The Mutilate killed Birds of Paradise, Yavimaya Barbarian, and the bane of monoblack, Phantom Centaur. Wood played a second Phyrexian Arena, wiped the board with a second Mutilate, and played out Planar Portal to take the first game of the match.

Sowards started out quickly in game 2 with Birds of Paradise and Anurid Brushhopper. After losing his Birds to Chainer's Edict, Ben played a Wild Mongrel and used Ice to tap down one of Wood's Swamps. A fourth-turn Shivan Wurm came out to play, and not even Mutilate could save Wood from the uber-fatty.

Sowards's deck let him down in games 3 and 4. A turn two Birds of Paradise was the only exciting early play by the red-green deck. Looking for a Swamp, Wood played Tainted Pact. Instead of seeing a Swamp, he passed a Cabal Coffers, only to turn over a second one two cards later. Drawing a Swamp allowed him to play Slay on Sowards's Birds of Paradise and follow that up with a Chainer's Edict, which took out an Armadillo Cloaked Phantom Centaur. A second Phantom Centaur was then hit with Mutilate. Next, two more Slays hit Yavimaya Barbarian and Spellbane Centaur. Three Slays wrecked any hope for the red-green deck. Wood still had a high life total as he took control of the game with a Corrupt for 8, a Nantuko Shade, and a Planar Portal.

In the final game, Sowards played two land but missed five consecutive land drops. By the time he started to draw land, Wood had already played Mind Sludge for five, a Phyrexian Arena, and a Planar Portal. Game over.

Sowards was pleased that he had gotten so far in such a large tournament. He called his deck an "unexpected treasure". He also said that his deck, built by himself and Ken Mosev, relied on the power of Armadillo Cloak over Elephant Guide, and that the Cloak had won half his games. He also found Morningtide to be very strong in the format.

Wood felt lucky to win such a large tournament. In a field of 364 players, he was happy to bring home such a large prize, especially considering that he threw the monoblack deck together after his friends dared him to play it. He said that he didn't run any creatures in the main deck in order to help his Innocent Bloods and to avoid opposing Flametogue Kavus. Asked about how he would use his winnings of "**Magic** for Life" he responded, "As long as I can, I'll play."

Josh Ochse and Tom Lapille both ended their runs in the tournament only a round away from competing for **Magic** for Life. Ochse ran a classic Goblin Trenches deck, while Lapille played a blue-green Wonder deck.

Josh Ochse, a 24 year old from Binghamton, New York, went to **Origins** for the Amateur Championships and the Team Limited Pro Tour Qualifier that was held there. His Goblin Trenches deck contained no cards from *Judgment,* but he hoped that *Judgment* would reduce Psychatog's presence in the metagame. That didn't end up happening, though—he was surprised to find that the field contained many Psychatogs. On the other hand, four of the decks in the Top 8 contained no main deck *Judgment* cards, so there is obviously something to be said for sticking with what works.

Thomas Wood
- 2002 Amateur Champion -

3	Addle
4	Chainer's Edict
2	Corrupt
3	Diabolic Tutor
4	Duress
1	Engineered Plague
1	Haunting Echoes
4	Innocent Blood
1	Legacy Weapon
1	Mind Sludge
3	Mutilate
4	Phyrexian Arena
1	Planar Portal
2	Soul Burn
2	Tainted Pact
3	Cabal Coffers
1	Crystal Quarry
20	Swamp

sideboard

1	Addle
1	Caustic Tar
2	Engineered Plague
1	Haunting Echoes
4	Nantuko Shade
1	Persecute
4	Slay
1	Tsabo's Decree

In the seminfinals, Ochse battled Tom Wood, the eventual winner of the tournament. Ochse mulliganed in game 1 and was hit with an early Duress that removed Fact or Fiction from his hand, leaving nothing but lands, Syncopate, and Fire/Ice. He was still able to play Goblin Trenches on turn three, though, while Wood missed land drops after playing out two Swamps and a Cabal Coffers. Ochse quickly made Goblins and sent them in, a strategy that paid off as Wood never found the fourth land that would have let him reset the board with Mutilate. Game 1 went to Ochse.

In game 2, Wood had another early Duress, and this time, he took Trenches. He proceeded to resolve Phyrexian Arena, while Ochse decided it was his turn to stall on three lands. Eventually, Wood played Mind Sludge for five, putting Ochse's entire hand into the graveyard. Wood followed that up with an Engineered Plague, naming Goblins, and from then on the game was academic. A Coffers-powered Nantuko Shade dealt 22 points of damage in a single swing for the win.

In the deciding game, Wood began with another Duress, this time taking Memory Lapse. His third-turn Phyrexian Arena was countered, and then Lightning Angel hit the table on Ochse's side, swinging for 3. Wood took this opportunity to play Phyrexian Arena. His Addle ran into Memory Lapse, and then Nantuko Shade resolved, only to be torched by the red half of Fire/Ice. The Angel continued to attack while the Addle was replayed, taking away Counterspell. Wood then played an Engineered Plague, naming Angels, to buy himself some time and resolved another Nantuko Shade. Then it was only a matter of playing Corrupt on the Lightning Angel, killing it and gaining some much-needed life, and bringing the Shade across for the win. Game and match to Tom Wood.

Tom Lapille, a 16 year old from Cincinnati, Ohio, also made the semifinals with his madness-based green-blue deck. He tested on Apprentice for a month and found the Incarnations to be the most powerful tools in the format. He started with Wonder as his base and built the fastest deck he could. He found that much of the field was running bounce, so he sided Roar of the Wurm out in many matches. He also said, "The deck has such potential for broken draws, sometimes you can't help but win."

In Game 1 of this semifinal match, Lapille led off with second and third turn Mongrels, while Sowards lead off with Anurid Brushhopper. The Brushhopper attacked into a surprise Arrogant Wurm, but Sowards had

Wax/Wane. Phantom Centaur also came out to play, but Lapille was able to stay in the game by dropping two Aquamoebas as blockers while a Mongrel and a Basking Rootwalla utilized the power of Wonder to fly over for the win.

Sowards had a faster start in game 2 with a second turn Anurid Brushhopper, while Lapille began with the standard Rootwalla-Mongrel curve. On turn 3, Sowards Cloaked up the Brushhopper and started swinging. Arrogant Wurm and Wild Mongrel eventually teamed up to take down the Brushhopper, which was removed from the game, causing the Armadillo Cloak to fall off. Sowards then played a Phantom Centaur and attempted to Cloak it up, but Circular Logic prevented that. Lapille was forced to chump block the Centaur, but he was using Merfolk Looter to dig for answers while at 6 life. He ran out of time when Sowards played Flametongue Kavu, destroying an Arrogant Wurm and setting up the win.

In game three, Sowards's early Mongrel and Spellbane Centaur were met with a Roar of the Wurm from Lapille. Sowards then played Shivan Wurm, and Lapille had no plays on his turn except to play Wonder. Ben first Fired Wonder and then attacked with Shivan Wurm, which went unblocked. Lapille attempted to stay in the game with Merfolk Looter and Basking Rootwalla, but Sowards saw his opening. He Iced Lapille's Wurm token, opening the way for his creatures that swung in and the game in short order.

Brad Davis finished the Swiss in first place with an 8-1 record, playing a green-red-blue "Snaketongue" build with no *Judgment* cards in the main deck or the sideboard. He fell in the quarterfinals 2-0 to Josh Ochse's Trenches deck.

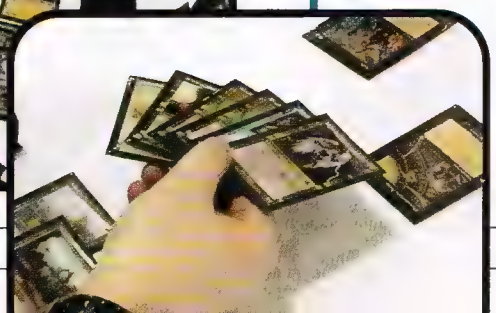
Brandon Rickard, a 17 year old from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, finished the Swiss rounds in third place after maneuvering his white-green Glory beatdown deck to a 7-0-2 record. He stated that, "Flametongue Kavu should never have been printed," and built his deck to beat both Psychatog and red-green. He's happy to be receiving a box each of the next three **Magic** sets. In game 1 of his quarterfinal match against Ben Sowards, he lost to an Armadillo Cloaked Phantom Centaur with Thornscape Apprentice backup. Game 2 came down to Glory being removed from the graveyard by Morningtide, and the match ended at 2-0 in favor of Sowards.

Vincent Gaglio is a 16 year old from Michigan who ran a fairly standard build of "Squirrel-Opposition" with four Seedtimes in his sideboard as his only *Judgment* cards. He finished fourth in the Swiss with a 7-0-2 record. He originally wasn't going to play in the Amateur Championships, but he couldn't sleep, so he entered after all. He felt that his deck, which beat many different archetypes through the day, remained strong after the release of *Judgment*. He fell 2-1 in his quarterfinal match against Thomas Wood's monoblack deck.

The last member of the Top 8, Andrew Benanzer, piloted a white beatdown deck that splashed black for Vindicate and Crypt Creeper, an important card in this graveyard-based format. He said that his deck smashes Psychatog, is good against red-green, and has a 60-40 matchup in its favor against green-blue. Andrew is a 20 year-old electrician from Greenville, Ohio, who often frequents the Wizard's Den in Cincinnati. His quarterfinal match up against Tom Lapille's green-blue came down to Lapille having Wonder in both games, which allowed his large green men to block the white birds.

All in all, the tournament ran smoothly according to Shawn Jeffries, the head judge. There were some questions about Genesis and some about Hunting Grounds bringing Hypnox into play (no, it doesn't remove your opponent's hand from the game), but that was about it. With 364 players competing, the 2002 Amateur Championships can certainly be called a success—just ask Thomas Wood.

Magic The Gathering® amateur™ CHAMPIONSHIP



FIRST PICKS

In each issue of Sideboard *Magazine, we open up a booster and have two top players explain what card they would take as a first pick, and why. In this installment, Pro Tour–San Diego quarterfinalist Eric Froehlich and three-time Pro Player of the Year Kai Budde analyze an* Odyssey *pack that contains several good cards and two top picks, Persuasion and Beast Attack.*

Kai Budde's Pick

The first thing I do when I open a booster in a draft is to go through the pack and put the good cards to the top. This lets me get a better view of my choices and provides an overiew of what the players I'm passing to are going to pick as well. Figuring out which colors are going to be drafted behind you is a huge help when determining which card is the right one for you to pick. In this case I would end up with Persuasion, Beast Attack, Beloved Chaplain, Flame Burst, Elephant Ambush, Aven Fisher, Ghastly Demise, and Ember Beast on top. This is an unusual number of good cards. Most of the time you end up pulling three or four cards to the top. Even though I don't consider Ember Beast or Flame Burst to be first-pick quality, I put those aside. If the guy next to me opened a red bomb, he might stick with that color and pick one of those red cards over better alternatives in another color. For me, there are only two cards that really matter: Persuasion and Beast Attack.

Both cards are excellent first picks and are powerful enough to win games on their own. Although Beast Attack requires triple green, it is slightly better then Persuasion. Generating two 4/4 creatures is huge in this format, which is ruled by 3/3 creatures. With only one *Odyssey* pack, the number of quality bounce spells is decreased, making Beast Attack even more powerful than it was in triple *Odyssey* draft. Persuasion, on the other hand, is a little situational. You want to keep it back until your opponent drops something worth stealing. If that happens, though, and he doesn't have a good answer, the effect is actually better than Beast Attack. There are few things more satisfying then playing Persuasion just after your opponent drops a Cabal Patriarch.

In this case, the difference between these two cards is so small that it is wrong just to pick the better card. There are a number of factors that have to be considered here. First of all, it's important to understand what the players behind you are going to draft. No matter what his or her first pick was, the player I am passing to should take either Persuasion or Beast Attack, depending on what I choose. After that, it gets a little tricky. The best card left in the pack is easily Ghastly Demise, but Aven Fisher, Ember Beast, and Elephant Ambush are left as well.

The high quality of this pack makes it impossible to guess what the player two to my left is going to draft. For example, the Demise is the best card, but if that player had red and green cards as first and second pick, he or she will probably draft the Ember Beast. With that in mind, the only player I can push into a color is the one behind me.

Generally, I want to avoid the color I am going to hook that player up with, as otherwise he or she would take my stuff in the second booster. If I don't want to mess with my neighbor, I'll have to abandon the color I am passing. If I get passed a bomb, I might change that, but for now I will assume that I want to stay out of the color of the card I am passing to the left.

That reduces the choice between Persuasion and Beast Attack to a different question; namely, do I want to draft blue cards or green cards? My answer to that question is, and probably will always be, blue.

Whenever I get the chance to draft blue in this format, I am not going to pass on it. I've had much success on the Pro Tour and Grand Prix circuit drafting blue whenever possible. Beast Attack is a slightly stronger card, and with the introduction of *Judgment* to the *Odyssey* block, green is better overall as well. For now, though, I am going to stick to my guns and take the blue card. If all else fails and I get passed nothing but green, I can still go green-blue in the end. After all, the only green *Torment* common you really want is Basking Rootwalla. If I pass the Persuasion and I am forced into blue afterwards, I won't be picking up any Skywing Avens or Deep Analysis in *Torment,* which hurts a lot more as the blue in *Judgment* is not strong enough to make up for that loss. *Judgment*'s green, on the other hand, can easily compensate for the loss of *Torment* green.

It is certainly controversial, but my answer to the question of Persuasion versus Beast Attack is: Take the blue card!

Protection from creatures
Nomad and Nantuko, eagle and elephant; all the birds and beasts are charmed by his quiet dignity.
1/1

Flame Burst deals X damage to target creature or player, where X is 2 plus the number of Flame Burst cards in all graveyards.
As hot as a dwarf's rage.

Elephant Ambush
Put a 3/3 green Elephant creature token into play.
Flashback 6 (You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)

Threshold -- Mystic Visionary has flying. (You have threshold as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)
"The aven are heralds of divinity. The greatest glory is to join them in the sky."
2/1

Scion of Desire
Enchant Creature
Enchanted creature gets +2/+2.
Threshold — All creatures able to block enchanted creature do so. (You have threshold as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)

Enchanted creature has flying.
Threshold — Enchanted creature can't be the target of spells or abilities. (You have threshold as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)

Eric Froehlich's Pick

Malevolent Awakening
Enchantment
1, Sacrifice a creature: Return target creature card from your graveyard to your hand.
The most popular pit fighters are brought back for encore performances.
Illus. Alex Horley

Instant
Put a 4/4 green Beast creature token into play.
Flashback 2 (You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)

Aven Fisher
Creature — Bird Soldier
Flying
When Aven Fisher is put into a graveyard from play, you may draw a card.
The same spears that catch their food today will defend their homes tomorrow.

Ghastly Demise
Instant
Destroy target nonblack creature if its toughness is less than or equal to the number of cards in your graveyard.
"Anyone can snap her fingers and rank a soul. I prefer to kill creatively."
Braids, dementia summoner
Illus. Gary Ruddell

When Phantom Whelp attacks or blocks, return it to its owner's hand at end of combat.
It lurks in the mist, waiting for stragglers to fall behind. When the fog clears, nothing remains but footprints.

Coffin Purge
Instant
Remove target card in a graveyard from the game.
Flashback (You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)
Illus. Pete Venters

Sorcery
Put a 1/1 green Squirrel creature token into play.
Flashback 1 (You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)
Illus. Jim Nelson

First turn, Chatter of the Squirrel. Second turn, Wild Mongrel. Third turn, Ember Beast. Fourth turn, Muscle Burst through a blocker and flash back the Chatter. You have just pulled off about the greatest start imaginable to an *Odyssey-Torment-Judgment* draft game. Best of all, your opponent passes his fifth turn without playing anything other than a fifth land. You hastily untap your four creatures, draw a card, and send them all back into the red zone for what appears to be the finishing blow on your poor opponent.

"Before blockers, add green, green, green, and two into my mana pool," he says.

You begin to slouch in your chair. A Beast Attack flies out of his hand and onto the stack. All you can muster is a simple "Resolves," as a 4/4 Beast hits the table and slides in front of your poor Ember Beast. Your Beast hits the graveyard, and his Beast lives, to be joined by a fellow 4/4 when the Attack is flashed back the following turn.

Beast Attack can swing games like no card before it. One 4/4 creature for five mana is a great bargain in the current draft format. The ability to create this creature at instant speed provides the advantage of forcing your opponent to attack into a monstrous creature. The surprise threat of such a creature completely changes how the game is played.

The beauty behind Beast Attack is that the threat of such a card causes an opponent to change the way he or she approaches each phase. An opponent unaware of the Beast Attack in your hand is left susceptible to walking into it, creating some unbelievable card advantage for you—a pair of 4/4 creatures, as well as killing off one or two opposing creatures, is almost impossible for your opponent to recover from.

Most opponents, however, won't throw their creatures to the Beasts when they suspect you may be holding the green bomb. But what if this opponent *knows* you have Beast Attack in your deck? It's likely if this were a Rochester Draft or if he had seen you play it in a previous game or round. The ability to bluff Beast Attack by leaving mana available is almost as strong as actually holding and playing it, as your wary opponent will generally hold back the attack, allowing you time to draw threats to stabilize the game or the Beast Attack itself.

When analyzing this particular pack, the other card that will quickly jump out is the creature enchantment with a gold expansion symbol on it: Persuasion. Aven Fisher is the only other playable blue card in the pack, and even the most diehard blue drafter will take the far superior Persuasion, which can take control of an opponent's strongest creature. Elephant Ambush provides a similar effect to that of Beast Attack, but the effect is weaker due to the smaller size of the creature produced and the difficulty in flashing the Ambush back.

With Beast Attack as the best green card in the pack and Persuasion as the best blue card, the only thing left to consider is leaving both of them behind. The most powerful, and only playable, black card in the pack is Ghastly Demise. An argument could certainly be made that the Demise is the right pick, as it will effectively cut off black from the player to your left, leaving you with a better shot of getting good black in *Torment*. The flaw in this strategy is that if you completely cut off black from the player to your left, it won't necessarily prevent him or her from taking a Faceless Butcher or Crippling Fatigue when he or she opens it in pack two. Thus, taking a weaker card in an attempt to cut off black is generally not a good strategy anymore.

The only other possibilities remaining are taking a red or white card. The only playable white card in this pack is Beloved Chaplain, and while it's a fine card, it's nowhere near the power level of the other cards in the pack. Red has two viable options, Ember Beast and Flame Burst. Both are fine cards, but when you compare them to the awesome card advantage provided by Persuasion and Beast Attack and consider the fact that they are red (the color believed to be the least powerful in *Odyssey-Torment-Judgment* draft), neither can be taken over our two bombs.

Now we've narrowed our choice down to two cards: Beast Attack and Persuasion. Persuasion's lack of surprise and the fact that it can be annihilated by highly-drafted cards, such as Æther Burst, Shelter, or Aven Cloudchaser, leave Beast Attack as the stronger card. Tack on the fact that it's green (the best color in both *Odyssey* and *Judgment*), and it becomes clear that you have the perfect first pick.

Grand Prix Milwaukee

by Aaron Forsythe

There have been more than 100 Grand Prix tournaments held in the history of **Magic**, but Grand Prix–Milwaukee was the first one to use the Standard format. With 652 people attending, Milwaukee passed Grand Prix–Detroit for the largest turnout at a North American Grand Prix event.

More than 100 competitors showed up packing Psychatog, and the rest of field was gunning for them. "Squirrel-Opposition" decks were also popular, many including red for Flametongue Kavu and Fire/Ice. Red-white-blue Goblin Trenches decks also turned up in droves. The other popular decks were monoblack decks with Braids, Cabal Minion and red-green beatdown. Although about 40 people piloted each of that last trio of decks, it was clear that the tournament was a battle between Psychatog, Trenches, and Opposition. Blue was king.

After eight rounds of Swiss on Day 1, the four 7-0 players were Justin Bing, Trevor Jones, Ken Bearl, and David Petersen, playing Psychatog, red-blue-green madness, Psychatog, and "Four-Color Braids", respectively. Petersen took his combination of Braids, Call of the Herd, Blazing Specter, and Violent Eruption (originally designed by Nick Little) to the Top 8, losing only one match in the Swiss.

Eric Taylor, longtime tourney-goer and Internet **Magic** theorist, piloted his Trenches deck to an 11-1-2 record in the Swiss, good enough to be the top seed heading into single elimination. Never having earned a spectacular finish despite years of trying, Taylor was the crowd favorite. Taylor's younger "half", Patrick Chapin, also made the Top 8. Chapin, piloting a self-made blue-green Opposition deck, was quoted at one point as saying his deck was "undefeated versus Salt Marsh."

Opposition had another champion in the Top 8—CMU's Mike Turian. Turian played a version with red, which he designed with the help of Canadians Francis Cormier and Louis Boileau, and which would later be used by Eugene Harvey to win U.S. Nationals.

Three players took Psychatog decks to the top through the sea of hate. Neil Reeves's version added red mana for Fire/Ice and Flametongue Kavu. Brian Kibler broke away from the anti-beatdown flavor of the month—Standstill and Æther Burst—and instead added Probe and Deep Analysis for card advantage in the mirror. Steve Cassell, who went with "Zevatog", the Standstill version of Psychatog designed by Zev Gurwitz, made the Top 8 through good play and good matchups.

The big story of the tournament was the big man with the big deck. William "Baby Huey" Jensen was the one soul brave enough to play a Battle of Wits deck, and he was rewarded with a Top 8 berth. His deck contained, among other things, sixteen different types of land and a backup plan of Wild Research and burn spells.

In the Top 8, Chapin took Petersen down in three, and Jensen lost to Reeves's Upheaval in their final game. Turian took on Kibler in a rematch from the Top 8 at Grand Prix–Toronto five years ago, and this time Turian rode Squirrel Nests to victory. Taylor's deck did what it was built to do—beat Cassell's Zevatog in three.

In the semifinals, Chapin continued to smash Psychatog decks, defeating Reeves in two straight. Taylor's sideboarded Lightning Angels made mincemeat of Turian in their crucial third game, setting up a finals showdown between Chapin and Taylor.

Chapin and Taylor, both of Ann Arbor, Michigan, have been playing **Magic** together since the first days of the Pro Tour. Chapin is a frequent guest at Taylor's apartment for long evenings of draft practice or deckbuilding, so it was both fitting and amazing that they met in the finals wielding two completely different decks.

Taylor was ready for this matchup, claiming that his sideboard was constructed to beat Chapin. Taylor had won their first encounter in round 11, and it was going to be an uphill fight for Chapin. A handful of permission and a Goblin Trenches took game one for Taylor, and then his sideboard sealed the deal. Meddling Mage, Flametongue Kavu, and Lightning Angel were all too difficult for Chapin to deal with, and he fell to the creature horde.

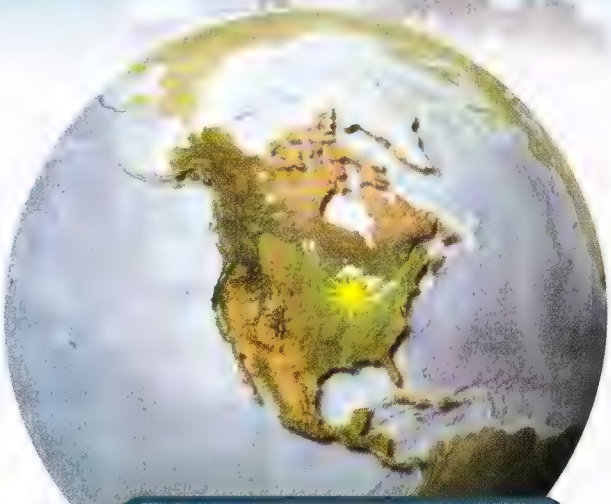
Eric Taylor is the champion of Grand Prix–Milwaukee, the largest North American Grand Prix to date, and what a fitting champion he is.

Eric Taylor
- Standard, March 2002 -

4	Absorb
4	Counterspell
4	Fact or Fiction
4	Fire/Ice
3	Goblin Trenches
4	Memory Lapse
3	Prophetic Bolt
4	Repulse
2	Syncopate
2	Wrath of God
3	Adarkar Wastes
2	Battlefield Forge
4	Coastal Tower
7	Island
3	Mountain
4	Shivan Reef
3	Skycloud Expanse

sideboard

2	Aura Blast
4	Flametongue Kavu
2	Gainsay
3	Lightning Angel
4	Meddling Mage



Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Eric Taylor	$2,400	6
2	Patrick Chapin	$1,700	5
3	Michael Turian	$1,200	4
4	Neil Reeves	$1,000	4
5	David Petersen	$800	3
6	Brian Kibler	$800	3
7	William Jensen	$800	3
8	Steve Cassell	$800	3
9	Justin Bing	$500	2
10	Elizabeth Lempicki	$500	2
11	Matt Johnson	$500	2
12	Ken Bearl	$500	2
13	Brady Williams	$500	2
14	Anthony Justice	$500	2
15	Brad Watson	$500	2
16	Brian Kowal	$500	2
17	Paul Ziegler	$250	1
18	Matthew Rubin	$250	1
19	Adam Fox	$250	1
20	Brent Heaser	$250	1
21	Chris Benafel	$250	1
22	Gabriel Tsang	$250	1
23	Jarod Burt	$250	1
24	Michael Pustilnik	$250	1
25	Geno Buffi	$250	1
26	Noah Weil	$250	1
27	Tom Willoughby	$250	1
28	Dale Taylor	$250	1
29	Jerry Sears	$250	1
30	Michael Flores	$250	1
31	Dan Bridy	$250	1
32	Robert Dougherty	$250	1
33	Erik Topham		
34	Michael Bernat		
35	Brant Faulkner		
36	Nathaniel Prawdzik		
37	Klaus Huebert		
38	Ray De Guzman		
39	Trevor Jones		
40	Morgan Douglass		
41	Lester Smerling		
42	Ben Stark		
43	Dan Rodemann		
44	Geddes Cooper		
45	Gerardo Godinez Estrada		
46	Ben Zoz		
47	Joshua Staudenraous		
48	Gary Krakower		
49	Peter Szigeti		
50	Ben Raymond		
51	David Johnson		
52	Ryan Ellis		
53	Dominic Gimelli		
54	Eric Kesselman		
55	Brian Hegstad		
56	Timothy Mckenna		
57	Matthew Diesch		
58	Kyle Reid		
59	Christopher Rocco		
60	Jeff Novekoff		
61	William Finn		
62	Alex Wheeler		
63	Jamie Woodward		
64	Mark Slack		

Grand Prix Nagoya

by Josh Bennett

The big question coming into this Grand Prix was, "Will Japan take home the title?" The previous Grand Prix-Nagoya was won by the invading team of Alex Shvartsman, Nick Wong, and Trevor Blackwell, and last year in Yokohama, ABU reigned. It was time for the trophy to stay on home soil.

Interestingly, this tournament seemed to showcase the growing instability of Japanese teams. North American and European teams are known for their shifting rosters, dropping and picking up players as needed to reach Pro Tour point quotas. For a long time, that wasn't the case in Japan. The strongest teams stuck together. All that went by the wayside at Nagoya. Panzer Hunters dropped a semi-retired Kazuyuki Momose and acquired back-to-back APAC Champion Masaya Mori. They were now The Beautiful World—certainly the Japanese team to fear.

There were plenty of other shake-ups. Team FireBeat lost graybeard Toshiki Tsukamoto and picked up The Last Emperor of Asia, Jin Okamoto, to become www.shop-fireball.com. Superstar Tsuyoshi Fujita and über-thug Masayuki Higashino went through a string of thirds before pinning their hopes on Takayuki Nagaoka, even naming their Team N.G.O.K. for N(a)G(a)OK(a). Grand Prix-Yokohama finalists Poor Shark couldn't secure Tomomi Otsuka, possibly Japan's best female player, and so enlisted the help of Rookie of the Year Katsuhiro Mori to form team P.S.2.

The gold at Nagoya wasn't just domestic. Alex Shvartsman was looking to retain his Nagoya title with the help of the fabulous Ruel brothers, on a team called "Breaking the Ruels". Singapore also sent a strong contingent, though it lacked the star power of Nick Wong or Albertus Law. Still, there's no denying the ability of Team Butchers, composed of Yujian Zhou, Sam Lau, and Royce Chai.

The cut at the end of Day 1 was not kind. Only twenty teams would draft on Sunday. The Butchers were not among them, and neither were the Ruels. Satoshi Nakamura and his team No Yaburon came close, as did Unchain (composed of Japanese *Sideboard* regulars Koichiro Maki, Isamu Fujieda, and gentle giant Kenichi Fujita), but not even a last-round win could get them in. However, all were excited that only domestic teams remained. For the rest, it was three grueling rounds of Team Rochester Draft. S.S.D. (Shuuhei Nakamura, Kimio Imai, and Naoki Kabouchi) and P.S.2 drew into the Top 4, and were joined by N.G.O.K. and local heroes Nagoyan (Ryo Ogura, Ryoma Shiozu, and Koji Nose).

N.G.O.K. faced S.S.D. in the semifinals. It was a particularly important match for Nakamura, who studied under Fujita. Just as it always seems to go, the apprentice surpassed his master, and P.S.2 took care of the upstart Nagoyans. It was time for the match that S.S.D. had put off with P.S.2.

The final draft was a slow-motion disaster for S.S.D. They kicked off, and tried their best not to commit right away. P.S.2, on the other hand, found their usual roles quickly. Kuroda would be black-red, Mori in the middle would take blue-green (his favorite), and Morita would head to white-green to stop Imai's emerging red-green. Opposite them, Nakamura went to black-white to stop Mori, and Kabouchi tried for green-blue. The cards were not kind to S.S.D., however, with Kabouchi being forced too far into red, and P.S.2 opening up outrageous card quality. The draft could be summed up as follows: P.S.2, three Overruns; S.S.D., zero. Not auspicious.

P.S.2 were having trouble keeping their spirits in check as they settled into deck construction. The odds-on favorites going into the draft, they had emerged seemingly indestructible. S.S.D.'s situation was quite the contrast. Hunched over their deck construction table, they were silent and could only shake their heads at their ill fortune.

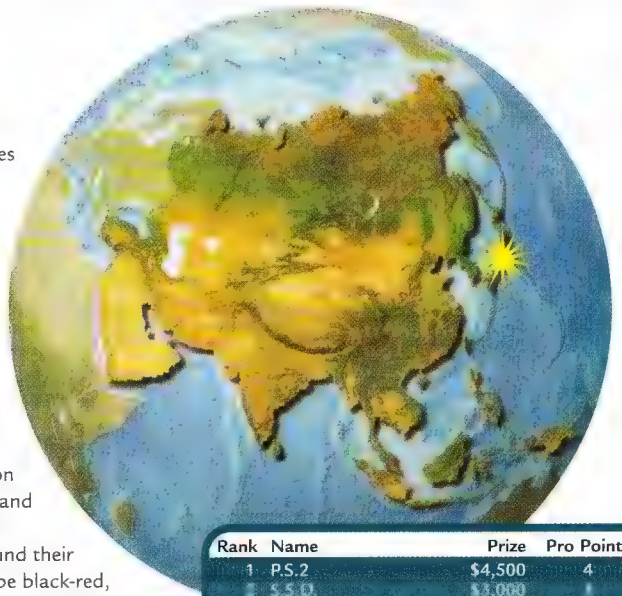
The final match began in a whirlwind, as Morita barely paused to take a breath while playing against Imai. First Narcissism, then Overrun, to take the match in two games. Nakamura was similarly ruthless in his match against Mori. The second game took an age, drawn out by Mori's Chamber of Manipulation, but he eventually succumbed to inevitability. In the meantime, Kuroda split two games with Kabouchi, taking the first handily but dropping the second to Metamorphic Wurm and Seton's Desire at threshold, followed up by Petradon.

That left everything up to Kuroda and Kabouchi's final game. Kuroda seemed to feel the pressure. Kabouchi was relaxed and animated—he was sure he would lose, which took all the stress out of him.

Kuroda stumbled at four land, and was shaken. Still, his cheap removal kept Kabouchi at bay. Kuroda's next draw was a swamp, and the hits started coming. Soul Scourge was followed up by Zombie Assassin to clear a path. Kabouchi had two draws left. The first was a land, and he was sent to 8 life. The crowd held its breath.

Metamorphic Wurm. But Kuroda turned over Waste Away to punch through the final damage. A huge cheer went up from the crowd as Kuroda was immediately mobbed by his teammates as well as Tsuyoshi Fujita. Poor Shark 2 had finally done it.

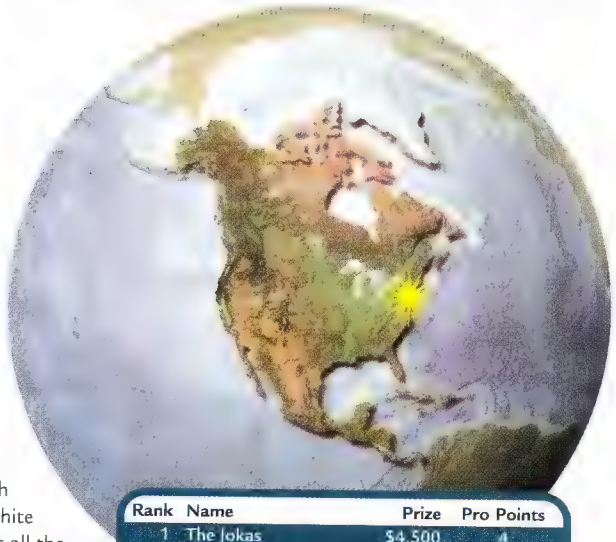
Left to Right: Masahiko Morita, Masashiro Kuroda, Katsuhiro Mori



Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	P.S.2	$4,500	4
2	S.S.D.	$3,000	3
3	NAGOYAN	$2,100	2
4	N.G.O.K.	$2,000	2
5	Su	$1,500	1
6	www.shop-fireball.com	$1,500	1
7	The Beautiful World	$1,200	1
8	Team Icy Manipulator	$1,200	1
9	Pi-taso	$900	1
10	GANG	$900	1
11	METALLICA	$600	1
12	Bashizumu	$600	1
13	Mropaganda		
14	MOMI-SAI		
15	T.A.O		
16	G-drei-zehn		
17	KiRiN		
18	Team Marts		
19	Team Dakara		
20	No Yaburon		
21	Team Butchers		
22	Hiroshima New Wave		
23	"Saga, Little Blue Masters"		
24	Team Emon Revolution		
25	DERAPIN		
26	Team Geddon Gamma		
27	Mammoth Teikoku		
28	Hypocrites		
29	Unchain		
30	Rainbow Mulligan		
31	BUFFERIN		
32	Team John Elders		
33	T.K.O		
34	Bakurai Champions		
35	Shikamoti Djinn		
36	Yasuda Festival K		
37	Team Tanki		
38	WWM		
39	Event No.2		
40	Spirits of C.C		
41	OZ		
42	Crystal Magic		
43	Muneo House		
44	Scorpion		
45	Atlantis Guild		
46	Roman Harmony		
47	Team Thirties		
48	Yoichi Club		
49	Hiroshiman		
50	Rancidmans		
51	Serra		
52	Team Food Chain		
53	C.M.D.		
54	Mahoudou		
55	Zimotti-Washooi		
56	Breaking the Ruels		
57	ADI. St		
58	Neo Abelanche feat. Q		
59	Troopers		
60	Nihon University		
61	Peppermint Cookie		
62	Team New Yaburon		
63	Hoshigumi		
64	ERIMAKITOKAGE		

Grand Prix New Jersey

by Toby Wachter



Pro-level competitive **Magic** came back to New Jersey for the first time since 1999 Pro Tour–New York, as 201 three-person teams came to the Garden State hoping to walk away with a Grand Prix Championship trophy. Usually the Pro Tour points and money that come with a Grand Prix win are more than enough motivation for the players involved, but this time there was an extra bonus: the winning team would earn an invitation to the Team Masters Series event during Pro Tour–Venice in March 2003. So, the winning team would not only earn $4,500 for their work in New Jersey, but would be guaranteed at least $9,000 more come March, and a chance to win $60,000. When you consider these kinds of payouts, it becomes apparent that this was not your typical Grand Prix.

A total of 603 competitors came to play on Saturday, and the field was cut to just 20 teams before the day was over. The format for the first day was Team Sealed Deck, which is always an interesting exercise, with teammates arguing back and forth about how to divide up their card pool to optimize each deck. For at least one team, Sealed Deck was the only order of the weekend. Team Deadguy, made up of Chris Pikula, Dave Price, and Tony Tsai, went 4-0-1 and dropped, opting to sit on their rating to get a Pro Tour invitation. The other interesting development on Saturday was the incident involving The TOGIT Connection, made up of Eugene Harvey, Mike Turian, and Osyp Lebedowicz. Harvey and Turian are two of the most dominant *Odyssey* Block Limited players in the world, and with rising star Lebedowicz by their side, The TOGIT Connection was the odds-on favorite to win the tournament. Things started off well, as the team was 3-1 going into the fifth round, but then Eugene Harvey had to leave due to a prior commitment playing piano at a concert. Lebedowicz and Turian were informed of this beforehand, but assumed the tournament would end before Harvey had to leave.

As Day 1 came to a close, many of the teams to make the cut to Sunday came as a surprise to no one. Among the teams that went to the draft tables on Day 2 were Pro Tour and Grand Prix Champions Your Move Games (Dave Humpherys, Darwin Kastle, and Rob Dougherty), Pro Tour Top 4 veterans Illuminati (Alex Shvartsman, Zvi Mowshowitz, and Justin Gary) and Bergerons (Ken Ho, Brian Kibler, and Ben Rubin). The Team Rochester Draft format presented an interesting challenge. Unlike in previous blocks, the packs in *Odyssey* block are heavily weighted towards specific colors. Therefore, the ideal placement of drafters is simple to figure out. You want your black drafter in Seat A so that he or she can grab as much *Torment* as possible, and you want your white drafter in Seat C so that he or she can get all the white in *Judgment*. This system created a bit of a draft metagame, which changed around some rules and adjusted card values. For example, Cabal Torturer is an excellent card in Limited, but its value is decreased in this format because the Seat A opponent is also likely to be black-red and will have many ways to kill the fragile 1/1 creature.

After three rounds of draft, the Top 4 had been decided. The experienced Illuminati would go up against the relatively unknown Team Cardshark (Jason Huang, Paul Sottosanti, and Adam Fischer), while The Jokas (Kyle Rose, Norman Woods, and Eric James) faced the intimidating trio of Lovespell (Chris Benafel, Alex Borteh, and Eric Froehlich). Illuminati ended Team Cardshark's Cinderella story, while The Jokas took out their accomplished opponents to head to the finals. In the final Team Rochester Draft of the weekend, Norman Woods of The Jokas drafted an insane green-red deck with Overrun, Centaur Chieftain, and *three* Arcane Teachings, yet lost to Alex Shvartsman in an upset that baffled players and spectators alike. Thanks to a pair of Faceless Butchers, James was able to take down Gary's impressive team of Sengir Vampire and Grotesque Hybrid in their third game. In the battle of Pro Tour Champions and former U.S. Nationals teammates, Rose's Phantom Nishoba took the first game, and Mowshowitz was mana screwed in the second game. With a 2-1 victory, The Jokas won the tournament and the invitation to Venice, while Illuminati again proved to be one of the best three-person teams in the world.

There was one big question left to be answered in the aftermath of the tournament: Who are Norman Woods and Eric James? Their accomplished teammate Kyle Rose has a Pro Tour win and a U.S. Nationals victory under his belt, but the two lesser-known players have apparently have returned to the game with a vengeance following an extended break. If Grand Prix–New Jersey is any indication, these two players may make bigger names for themselves in Venice, while Rose continues to cement his reputation as one of the game's best.

Left to Right: Norman Woods, Kyle Rose, Eric James

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	The Jokas	$4,500	4
2	Illuminati	$3,000	3
3	Team Cardshark	$2,100	2
4	Lovespell	$2,000	2
5	Team TOGIT	$1,500	1
6	Your Move Games	$1,500	1
7	cardhaus.com	$1,200	1
8	Exhisposition Center	$1,200	1
9	Raw Dogs	$900	1
10	To the Bar	$900	1
11	RDU	$600	1
12	Bergerons	$600	1
13	Josemagic.com		
14	JBL		
15	Affirmative Action		
16	CFish and the Rockettes		
17	FamilyGamesCenter.com		
18	QDB		
19	2017		
20	Good vems		
21	Scarecrow		
22	JJI's		
23	Tight Fung Tight		
24	NJDS		
25	Your Enemy		
26	Barnacle Brothers		
27	Blunt Force		
28	yourmovegames.com		
29	Noooooot....Payin'		
30	3 Fly Brothaz		
31	Medium Pimpin Wizards		
32	Klever Kitties		
33	Little Wizards		
34	Land Squid Puma Burglers		
35	Giant Cockroach		
36	Gusto & Friends		
37	Ugly in our Way		
38	Green Monsters		
39	The Ancient Kavus		
40	Big Daddy		
41	Unknown Comics and Games		
42	23 Cents		
43	Anand Khare's Fantabulous		
44	Dead Rockstars		
45	Stalking Anna		
46	Watching Dan Clegg		
47	The Syndicate		
48	Nameless Race		
49	ETTCNH		
50	3 sticks in the Mud		
51	Dig Dug		
52	Complicated		
53	Team Deadguy		
54	Dead Wizards		
55	Team AT & T		
56	Mudhole for the Win		
57	Team Psycho		
58	Taco Fresca		
59	Suicide Kingz		
60	Fob Squad		
61	BFG		
62	9-Iron		
63	Hookie Jookie		
64	The Taint		

Grand Prix São Paulo

by Rui Oliveira

Gabriel Caligaris and Felipe Desiderati were probably glad that they had a quick final match. The crowd leaning over the table was getting too close and nervous for comfort. As Caligaris's Psychatog ate one chump blocker after another, spectators had to wonder if this was really a new Standard format.

It all started the day before, when over 300 hopefuls entered Club Homs in São Paulo to help shape the new metagame. The first lesson we learned was that good players always do their Constructed homework. Almost all the Pros showed up with finely tuned decks.

The top of the standings after Day 1 was a "Who's Who" of the Grand Prix. Antoine Ruel topped the standings with a Psychatog deck that was created by Frederic Courtois and splashed green for Pernicious Deed. The only other players with 7-0 Day 1 results were former Brazilian Grand Prix winner Carlos "Jabaiano" Romao and Steven O'Mahoney-Schwartz. Right behind them were Mikey Pustilnik and the last Brazilian Grand Prix winner, Guilherme Svaldi.

One sign of how much the format hasn't changed is that in the top places, you can find at least three different types of Psychatog decks. Ruel played "DeedAtog", Pustilnik piloted "Zevatog" (with Cunning Wish), and Caligaris played a simple "CunningTog". Psychatog is alive and well despite rumors of its demise.

Day 2 was the usual scramble for the Top 8. Antoine Ruel didn't take his foot off the throttle until he secured his spot after the tenth round. Two rounds later, Raphael Gunther and Andre Barreto joined him.

In the final round, Caligaris pushed Leopoldo Martins to the tiebreaker lottery, Michel Shirozono stopped Steve OMS, Desiderati crushed Svaldi's plans for a second Grand Prix win, and Luis Massaro defeated the other American, Pustilnik. The last spot went to Rodrigo Castro, who earned it the hardest way: he defeated Diego Ostrovich to become the only player with 30 points to make the Top 8 (by 1% in tiebreakers).

The quarterfinals gave us two all-Brazil matches. In the first one, Desiderati's green-blue deck outlasted Andre Barreto's green-red on the basis of some very good starts—always playing Careful Study on your first turn helps. The match was a bit edgy, with both players letting the pressure get to them, but they talked about it afterwards and all ended well.

Meanwhile, the silent Massaro let his "Trenches" deck do the talking, taking Raphael Gunther's green-blue in three games. The last game was decided by a card Trenches decks don't normally use: Fledging Dragon. It might seem unorthodox, but with the ground clogged up, the Dragon was the perfect play for Massaro.

The other two tables had a common story—Brazilians trying to stop foreigners—but very different actors. Shirozono was paired against the young, unheralded Argentinean Caligaris, meaning that Rodrigo Castro had a huge challenge ahead of him: finding a way to stop Antoine Ruel and his brutal deck.

The Brazilians lost both matches 2-0. Shirozono's "Squirrel-Opposition" and Rodrigo's green-blue-red madness couldn't handle the Psychatog decks. The semifinals paired Desiderati against Massaro and Caligaris against Ruel.

Desiderati and Massaro finished their business in a blur. The game Massaro took revolved around swinging with Flametongue Kavus, while the games Desiderati won were all about getting Wonder into the graveyard and attacking with Wurm tokens. It was over in a few minutes.

The other table was a struggle. After two very long games, the third came to an abrupt end when Caligaris emerged victorious from a mammoth stack that started with Mana Short and ended with Ruel tapped out. The Argentinean took the opening to play Upheaval and replay his Psychatog. That was more than enough to win the game on the following turn.

Our finalists were Gabriel Caligaris, from Argentina, and Felipe Desiderati, from Brazil. Since these countries have a heated rivalry in everything, the crowd got into the match. In the final turns of the last game of the finals, Caligaris was totally relaxed, and Desiderati was completely resigned to his fate. Few things can stop Psychatog in full stride, and Desiderati had little hope left of taking the trophy home. For the second time in five Brazilian Grand Prix events, a foreigner won.

For nineteen-year old Caligaris, it was more than a Grand Prix win. It was a sign that he might want to take that "taking a year off to play **Magic** professionally" idea very seriously. For the rest of us, it was a warning—Dr. Teeth is still around.

Gabriel Caligaris

- Standard, July 2002 -

4	Nightscape Familiar
4	Psychatog
4	Chainer's Edict
3	Circular Logic
4	Counterspell
3	Cunning Wish
2	Deep Analysis
3	Fact or Fiction
4	Force Spike
3	Repulse
2	Upheaval
1	Cephalid Coliseum
2	Darkwater Catacombs
10	Island
4	Salt Marsh
3	Swamp
4	Underground River

sideboard

1	Coffin Purge
1	Deep Analysis
3	Duress
1	Fact or Fiction
4	Ghastly Demise
1	Hibernation
1	Mana Short
1	Opportunity
1	Psychotic Haze
1	Teferi's Response

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Gabriel Caligaris	$2,400	6
2	Felipe Desiderati	$1,700	5
3	Antoine Ruel	$1,200	4
4	Luis Massaro	$1,000	4
5	Raphael Gunther	$800	3
6	Andre Leao Barreto	$800	3
7	Michel Shirozono	$800	3
8	Rodrigo Castro	$800	3
9	Leopoldo Martins Moreira	$500	2
10	Jose Barbero	$500	2
11	Steven OMS	$500	2
12	Ary Diarte Capistrano	$500	2
13	Sergio Martins	$500	2
14	Vagner Casati	$500	2
15	Guilherme Svaldi	$500	2
16	Ricardo Salgado	$500	2
17	Marco Marcelo Zimmer	$250	1
18	Carlos Romão	$250	1
19	Michael Pustilnik	$250	1
20	Gabriel Michelena	$250	1
21	Ricardo De Barros	$250	1
22	Victor Galimberto	$250	1
23	Vinicius Perez Marcelo	$250	1
24	Diego Ostrovich	$250	1
25	Leandro Vieira	$250	1
26	Rodrigo Possamai	$250	1
27	Orlando Epifanio	$250	1
28	Celso Zampere jr	$250	1
29	Caio Del Moral Pires	$250	1
30	José Fra Da Silva	$250	1
31	Jonathan Melamed	$250	1
32	Jose Luiz Marambio	$250	1
33	Walter Bruno Sant'Anna		
34	Thales Lima Dos Santos		
35	Sergio Longo Jr.		
36	William Possato		
37	Andre Carlos Nascimento		
38	Bruno Roberto Giacomelli		
39	Julian Brown-Santirso		
40	Edson Santos		
41	Tadeu Capela		
42	Fabio Gomes Da Silva		
43	Rogerio Siqueira		
44	João Paulo Leite Araujo		
45	Daniel Brasil Do Carmo		
46	Adriano Yuji Ueda		
47	Sergio Solis Checa		
48	Bernardo Da Costa Cabral		
49	Thomas Felsberg		
50	Omar Salomao		
51	Bruno Guimarães		
52	Carlos Craveiro Da Silva		
53	Tiago Souza Rodrigues		
54	Roberto Dantas Da Silva		
55	Wesley Hesketh Brito		
56	Gustavo Scherrer		
57	Ricardo Cabrini		
58	Fabiano Lucindo		
59	Dawton Possato		
60	Willian Bernardino		
61	Eduardo De Carvalho		
62	Jose Gutierrez		
63	Gustavo Ferrei De Matos		
64	Alex Sousa		

Grand Prix Taipei

by Josh Bennett

The dawn of a new Standard environment is always exciting. Since the release of the *Judgment* set, players have discussed its cards, hoping to discern which will be the next big thing. Grand Prix–Taipei was the first major tournament to feature the new Standard, and just over 200 players turned up to show off their creations. Taiwan's top players were all there, looking to upset visiting pro contingents from Singapore and Japan.

On Day 1, it seemed that nothing was too crazy to be tried out. The most-played deck was Quiet Speculation, grafting the ability to tutor up three 6/6's onto the already potent blue-green madness package. Even these decks, though, were not rigidly defined. Some splashed red for removal. Some stretched into Opposition territory. Surprisingly, there were many blue-green madness decks that didn't use Speculation.

Right behind was the proven power of Psychatog. Modernized to feature Flametongue Kavu and both halves of Fire/Ice, its players hoped to trump the relatively untested designs of their opponents. After those two standouts, there was plenty of variety. Green-red-white beatdown, supercharged with Anurid Brushhopper and Phantom Centaur. Goblin Trenches, with Fledgling Dragon for an alternate kill. Cunning Wish control decks. Genesis! Glory! Sylvan Safekeeper! It was utter bedlam.

At the close of Day 1, it looked like Dr. Teeth would be claiming another tournament title, in the hands of a Japanese or Singaporean player. Virtually all of the big names had made Day 2. However, Morris Song and Wen-Jien Hwang of Taiwan lead the standings with 7-0 records. Song was running Quiet Speculation, sending his Wurm tokens to the air, courtesy of a discarded Wonder. Hwang was playing an innovative red-green beatdown deck with main deck Ensnaring Bridges and Browbeat, which went well with his impressive array of burn spells.

The rallying cry of Song and Hwang was heard, and by the end of the Swiss, the Taiwanese players controlled almost all of the Top 8. Katsuhiro "Quicksilver" Mori almost made it in despite running 30 land in his Psychatog deck thanks to a deck registration error. He won four of his Day 2 matches, walking away with $500 on the weekend. Joining Song and Hwang in the Top 8 were Chang Ming Tung, Lucifar Sun, Kang Nien Chiang, and amateurs Joe Wang and Sheng Hsun Hsia.

Hsia was clearly the fan favorite. His wacky blue-white-green control deck, abusing Living Wish and Hunting Grounds, always had the most spectators around it. He'd made it to the Top 8 without the benefit of byes, so onlookers were eager to see how far his design could take him.

The Top 8 started on a sour note, with Tung receiving a match loss for marked sleeves. Song had drawn Hsia, and after splitting the first two games, the upstart Hsia took the match on the back of Phantom Nishoba, the highlight of his design. Law dispatched Hwang with ease. Meanwhile, Joe Wang's blue-green madness, sans-Speculation, took out Sun and his modified Psychatog.

Law believed he could take the tournament, but couldn't believe his ill fortune when he faced Chiang in the semifinals. Chiang was playing "Squirrel-Opposition" with Cunning Wish, a nightmare match for Psychatog. Sure enough, Chiang advanced without difficulty. Wang's madness deck proved too short on pressure to handle Hsia's control, and so it was Hsia and Chiang in the finals.

They started to play as "The Final Countdown" played over the venue's speakers. Hsia was clearly wowed to be in the finals. After slaughtering Chiang in the first game, his confidence distracted him. He seemed to have game 2 locked up at 2 life, safe behind Circle of Protection: Green, but a misplay left him without enough mana to counter twice in one turn. Chiang baited with Opposition, and when Hsia bit, showed him Fire for the win.

One game would decide the match. Chiang struggled with just two land but had two Birds of Paradise to help him out. Hsia's Fact or Fiction and Deep Analysis put him way out in front, but he had no white mana to seal the deal with Wrath of God. Meanwhile, Chiang's all-action draw stripped him of countermagic. Finally, Hsia Wrathed and then tapped out for Phantom Nishoba. Two turns later the game was his. Between the first-place paycheck and the prize for top amateur, Hsia's innovation paid off big time.

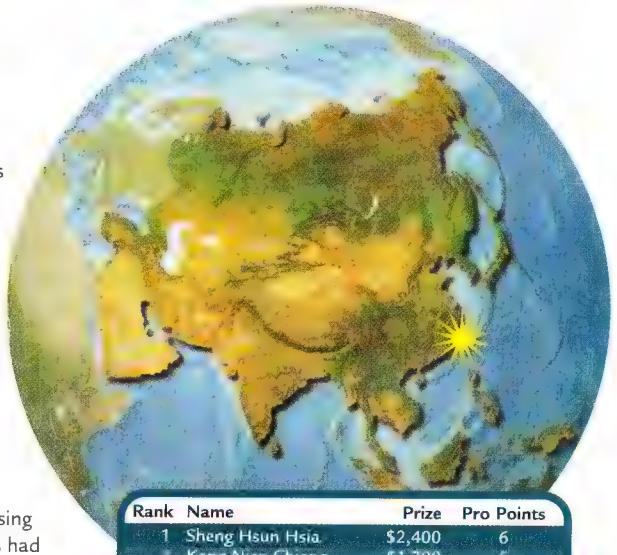
Sheng Hsun Hsia

- Standard, July 2002 -

1	Genesis
1	Mystic Enforcer
3	Mystic Snake
4	Absorb
4	Counterspell
3	Deep Analysis
2	Exclude
4	Fact or Fiction
2	Hunting Grounds
2	Living Wish
3	Memory Lapse
4	Repulse
3	Wrath of God
2	Adarkar Wastes
2	Brushland
3	Coastal Tower
1	Forest
5	Island
2	Nantuko Monastery
1	Plains
2	Skycloud Expanse
3	Sungrass Prairie
3	Yavimaya Coast

sideboard

1	Aven Cloudchaser
1	COP: Green
3	Meddling Mage
1	Mystic Snake
1	Nantuko Tracer
1	Phantom Nishoba
3	Seedtime
3	Tangle
1	Thornscape Battlemage



Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Sheng Hsun Hsia	$2,400	6
2	Kang Nien Chiang	$1,700	5
3	Joe Yi Xiang Wang	$1,200	4
4	Albertus Hui Chin Law	$1,000	4
5	Morris Song	$800	3
6	Wen-Jien Hwang	$800	3
7	Chang Ming Tung	$800	3
8	Lucifar Sun	$800	3
9	Chi-Chung Hwang	$500	2
10	Youn Ming Hwang	$500	2
11	Jose Han Yu Chang	$500	2
12	Masahiko Morita	$500	2
13	Chien-Ming Jen	$500	2
14	Kazuya Hirabayashi	$500	2
15	Katsuhiro Mori	$500	2
16	Marco Kwang-Ju Liu	$500	2
17	Ming-Chih Wang	$250	1
18	Bruce Pai	$250	1
19	Ung-Hsiang Chen	$250	1
20	Tsuyoshi Fujita	$250	1
21	Satoshi Nakamura	$250	1
22	Dell Sun	$250	1
23	Bo Ruan Chun	$250	1
24	Mongkol Tachasukjai	$250	1
25	Sam Lei Kang Lau	$250	1
26	Andy Chang	$250	1
27	Yeng-Hau Chen	$250	1
28	Takashi Mitsuhashi	$250	1
29	Ping Long Lee	$250	1
30	Miller Ming Yi Tsai	$250	1
31	Tzu Ching Kuo	$250	1
32	Nicholas Jonatha Wong	$250	1
33	Chang Chua		
34	Jacky Chih-Hao Chiang		
35	Yi-Hua Weng		
36	Yue-Wei Yang		
37	Jong-Yi Ho		
38	Fu Yun Yang		
39	Alex Huang		
40	Aric Hsu		
41	Ryan Young		
42	Samson Xiang Y Liu		
43	Chen-Yu Weng		
44	Chang Ching Ko		
45	Shan Bai		
46	Horng Gi Tsai		
47	Yujian Zhou		
48	Motoki Kobashi		
49	Gary Gui Ping Tan		
50	Shee-Hwei Lee		
51	Sung Hui Lin		
52	Chih-Hsiang Chang		
53	Partick Li		
54	Yen-Chang Lee		
55	Jack Yang		
56	Takashi Niwa		
57	Li-Chyun Su		
58	Itaru Ishida		
59	Chi Hsen Guo		
60	Jun Chen Su		
61	Katsuya Hiroki		
62	Taylor Yang		
63	Yi-Ping Lee		
64	Yi-Jie Lin		

Thanks

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Glory

It Dies So Your Army Can Live

by Vivian Kitler

Imagine that you're playing in the Masques Block Constructed Pro Tour–New York. You sit down, shuffle up your "Rebel" deck, and proceed to make short work of your first two opponents, largely because neither one is playing Rebels. Your next opponent, though, starts off with your own favorite first-turn play: Plains, Ramosian Sergeant. You then play a Sergeant of your own, and soon you're both sitting behind massive Rebel armies, fighting for Lin Sivvi superiority. But as soon as you think you've secured the advantage, your opponent attacks with all of his creatures.

"Reverent Mantra, name white, Ramosian Rally, attack for 21." And that's game.

That year's Pro Tour–New York, referred to as "PT Lin Sivvi", was heavily influenced by Reverent Mantra. With over half of the competitors playing Rebels, a tremendous number of games came down to who could pull off a Mantra kill first. The ability to give all of your creatures protection from a color of your choice at instant speed was one that decided games in other ways, too, protecting key creatures from removal, bounce effects, and more.

To many of today's players, PT Lin Sivvi is but a legend. *Judgment*, though, has brought us a card that will surely trigger flashbacks of those days. That card is Glory.

On first examination, the effects created by Glory and Reverent Mantra are nearly identical. Reverent Mantra, at the cost of either 3 ✱ or removing a white card in your hand from the game, gives all creatures in play protection from the color of your choice, while Glory, while in your graveyard, gives all your creatures protection from any color for 2 ✱. It is in their costs and requirements for use that these two cards differ most, and it is these differences that influence what impact the two cards have in various situations.

Because of its alternate cost, Reverent Mantra is effective at protecting key creatures from removal in the early turns of the game, something that Glory's ability, because of its mana cost and because you must get Glory into the graveyard to use it, cannot accomplish as easily. On the other hand, Glory is better than Reverent Mantra at providing a late-game win condition, as it can be activated multiple times over multiple turns, giving your creatures protection from several colors to push past your opponent's defenses.

This comparison between Mantra and Glory helps us understand what Glory can and cannot do. Glory cannot protect your creatures from removal effects in the early turns of the game unless you hold back an unwieldy amount of untapped mana, but what it can do is turn a stalemate into a mauling, allowing your creatures to bypass opposing blockers and making your blockers nearly invincible. If there's a race, Glory wins it.

The Incarnations, Glory included, pose a unique problem for control decks. As long as you can get Glory into the graveyard—hardly difficult in this environment of Wild Mongrels, Anurid Brushhoppers, and the like—you have access to as many uncounterable Reverent Mantra effects as you have mana for, over any number of turns. While the creature-recurring ability of Genesis may be more of a problem than Glory for traditional control decks, the most potent control deck in the current Standard environment is Psychatog, which hardly fits the typical control-deck mold.

Psychatog's plan is to stall the early game long enough to generate card advantage with Fact or Fiction, Probe, and Deep Analysis, and then gain huge board advantage with Upheaval. As the red-green decks that dominated Canadian Nationals showed, the way to beat Psychatog is to win as quickly as possible, giving it no chance to take advantage of its late game card drawing and resets. Glory contributes to this plan by letting your creatures ignore opposing blockers and, if you have mana untapped, opposing bounce and removal effects, letting you swarm in unimpeded for the kill.

Glory is also devastating against creature decks. Envision this situation. Your opponent is attacking with Wild Mongrel and Arrogant Wurm and has three lands untapped. Can you block with a Mongrel and an Arrogant Wurm of your own, allowing your opponent to nearly wipe out your entire board for no cost in cards by discarding Glory and paying 2 ✱? Glory's impact on combat math is nightmarish, turning certain trades into the devastation of the side without Glory support. It can also turn a complicated blocking situation into a straight-up beating, sending your creatures in unblockable every turn.

If Glory is so powerful, what can be done to stop it? Glory is at its best in the graveyard, which makes it vulnerable to graveyard removal effects like Haunting Echoes or Coffin Purge. However, it's notable that Glory is the only Incarnation that affects the game once it has been removed from the graveyard. If you attack all-out and discard and activate Glory, a Coffin Purge won't stop your protection from black army. Other than having graveyard removal or a rainbow assortment of creatures and creature removal, mana deprivation is the only way to contain Glory, and besides Upheaval, the effective mana control available in Standard is slim to none.

Coffin Purge, or die. Upheaval, or get run over. Not the most appealing array of options, are they? *Judgment* is going to change the way Standard is played, and the Incarnations won't be a small factor in that paradigm shift. Just like its flavor text says, Glory will soon be everywhere, and you had better be ready.

Flying
2 ✱: Creatures you control gain protection from the color of your choice until end of turn. Play this ability only if Glory is in your graveyard.
"Glory was gone; Glory was everywhere."
–Scroll of Beginnings

✦DONATO GIANCOLA

Blistering Firecat

A Bigger Ball Lightning?

by Dave Price

The Dark didn't add many powerful tournament cards to Constructed formats. Amnesia made a brief appearance in Classic, allowing blue-white control players to play with a Mind Twist–like card while Mind Twist was banned. Ghost Ship was a part of the "Big Blue" creature deck that dominated Standard for a short period of time. Scavenger Folk appeared in some "Stompy" decks, and Spitting Slug showed up in a rogue deck in Extended. Blood Moon punished users of dual lands, and Fellwar Stone gave decks some good mana acceleration, as well as some unreliable help in finding the right colors. Not an impressive list of cards to be sure, appearing only briefly in Constructed, making very little impact, and then fading away. Still, there was one card from *The Dark* that had a huge impact on Constructed and was quite popular in all formats from Standard to Classic: Ball Lightning. This card single-handedly struck fear into the heart of anyone playing against a mono-red deck. Players had to carefully consider their life totals before tapping out against any red player with access to three or more mountains. Many a player died to a surprise 6/1 trampler while holding a fist full of Counterspells, simply because he or she had tapped out to do something on his or her turn.

But why reminisce about cards that are no longer legal in Standard or Extended? Sure, those were the good old days, but what matters now are the cards in the new sets, right? Absolutely. With *Onslaught,* the next standalone set for **Magic: The Gathering**, comes a creature very much in the spirit of Ball Lightning, with the potential to be even better: Blistering Firecat.

Not only is Blistering Firecat an enormous 7/1 creature with trample and haste for 1 ◕◕◕, but it is also equipped with a new mechanic that can only make it better. For three generic mana, a player can put Blistering Firecat into play face down as a vanilla 2/2 colorless creature. Later on, if the player so wishes, he or she can pay its morph cost (in this case, ◕◕) to turn it into a 7/1 creature with trample and haste that will die at the end of the turn.

Let's say that you are playing a red beatdown deck, and you get a slightly abnormal opening hand with two Blistering Firecats in it. On the third turn, you have nothing to play, so you put one of your Blistering Firecats into play as a 2/2 creature. Then, on your fourth turn, you can play the other Firecat as its normal self and attack for a whopping 9 points of damage. Later in the game, if you have two red mana to spare, the first Blistering Firecat can morph into a 7/1 trampler as well. This new mechanic provides Blistering Firecat with a flexibility that the old Ball Lightning never had.

Putting a 2/2 colorless creature into play can have a number of other advantages for a red deck. If your opponent has a Circle of Protection: Red or a Chill on the board, you had better believe that this new ability will come in handy. In addition, suppose that you decide to include Blistering Firecat in a two-color deck. Sometimes it might be difficult to pay the 1 ◕◕◕ mana cost, as you may not always have that much red mana available. If you have one or no red mana available, you can play the Firecat as a 2/2 creature. If you have two red mana available, you can spend three generic mana to put it into play and then spend the two red mana to morph it into the real Blistering Firecat, giving the card an effective mana cost of 3 ◕◕.

Trample, haste
At end of turn, sacrifice Blistering Firecat.
Morph ◕◕ (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)
7/1

Even without Blistering Firecat's exciting new ability, this creature is a powerhouse. How often do you see 7 points of damage packed into one card? If three Blistering Firecats get through, your opponent is as good as dead. While it is a bit more expensive than Ball Lightning, that extra point of damage is not insignificant. By the time Blistering Firecat is legal for Standard, Flametongue Kavu will be gone, and the days of mono-red decks focusing on card advantage and board control might be, too. The new Standard environment may call for mono-red decks to deal 20 points of damage to the opponent as quickly as possible, and Blistering Firecat is the perfect creature for the job. With its new friends—Grim Lavamancer and Jeska, Warrior Adept—Blistering Firecat is ready to paint the town red.

Smother

Kills Psychatog Dead

by Josh Bennett

Black point removal has a varied history. In the beginning, there was Terror. Some threatening monster would make an appearance, and a black mage would just shrug his or her shoulders. Terror was the universal answer. No fuss, no muss, just put it in the graveyard and go about your business. Provided, of course, you didn't want to hit a black or artifact creature. Those were strictly off-limits.

For a long time, that was the persistent restriction. Black has trouble dealing with black creatures. Dark Banishing continued this trend, replacing the more powerful Terror in the base set. That's what made *Planeshift*'s Terminate such a winner. All it took was the decision that it was time for something to die, and it happened. The security afforded by a ready-to-order death warrant was not to be underestimated.

The only problem was the color commitment. In order to get the full laid-back elimination experience, you had to be playing black and red. That helped limit the use of Terminate to the dedicated black-red board- and hand-destroying "Machinehead" and the green-red decks that were already dipping into black for Spiritmonger. Still, it stood out as a shining example of what creature removal was all about.

At the other end of the spectrum is *Torment*'s Chainer's Edict. Stuck at sorcery speed and always hitting your opponent's worst creature, it's got a lot working against it. It makes up for it by being easy to play and answering the first threat without question—black, untargetable, it doesn't matter. And once you hit seven mana, you're really getting your money's worth with that flashback. Unfortunately, an errant Birds of Paradise could mean your Edict was just a waste of time.

Smother is the next in this line of Terror variants, and its appearance couldn't be timelier. It borrows from Terminate the ability to hit black and artifact creatures, as well as a return to the classic instant speed, but it does so at the cost of a seemingly harsher restriction. As long as a creature costs enough to play, Smother can't touch it. Higher mana cost means higher power, so it looks like Smother won't be able to handle the most dangerous cards.

Let's be honest, though—when was the last time someone dropped a Verdant Force in Standard? The expensive heavy-hitters of yesteryear have taken a backseat in this modern age of quick, efficient beats. Roar of the Wurm costs four to play, sure, but the token dies to Smother all the same.

So, assuming for the moment that you won't let your opponent survive until turn twenty without being able to handle a four-mana threat, what does Smother give you? Early on, it'll work as point removal for whatever's troubling you. Stuck with a slow hand and facing a turn-two Call of the Herd off Birds of Paradise? Smother it. Merfolk Looter coming online next turn? Break out the pillow.

Not convinced? Are you willing to rely on proven two-mana answers like Æther Burst? The choices available will be limited. Repulse, Fire/Ice, and Terminate will all have rotated out of Standard to make way for *Onslaught*. Even the mighty Flametongue Kavu, outside Smother's reach, will have hit the bench. Smother can fix the problems they once did.

There are even better reasons to run Smother. The first is Wild Mongrel. That nigh-unkillable beastie hits on turn two and rules the board, paving the way for all kinds of madness shenanigans. Many's the black mage who's tried to Edict away a Mongrel only to watch Basking Rootwalla make the save. Arrogant Wurm usually provides the three-mana injury to insult.

Smother puts the Mongrel in its place. It can change color all it likes, but it's still taking an extended cemetery vacation. It has the added bonus of delaying Arrogant Wurm until the more reasonable turn five, pushing back a card it can't handle until a time when something else can do the job.

If the ability to stop the Mongrel in its tracks appeals to you, you'll love the way Smother wipes the smile off Psychatog's face. Here's the situation: Your opponent has just floated nine and played Upheaval. You float two in response. The end result is a very sad 'Tog player. Besides being a sound response to a clumsy try at an Upheaval win, Smother hands Psychatog his walking papers at any point in the game, removing his status as early-game fort-holder extraordinaire.

In addition to being a powerful early-game removal spell, Smother provides an answer to two of the creatures that have defined the Standard environment of late. That all adds up to a card that will take its place as the removal option of choice in the coming months.

Smother
Instant
Destroy target creature with converted mana cost 3 or less. It can't be regenerated.
"I can't hear them scream, but at least I don't have to listen to them beg."
Phage the Untouchable
Illus. Carl Critchlow

Drafting to Win

It's not in the Draw; It's in the Draft

by Matt Vienneau

It's the second round of a draft, your opponent is at 4 life, and you're holding Giant Growth and Fear. You're begging to draw a creature, but it doesn't happen, and you lose. In another match, your two Mystic Zealots could pull it out if only you had threshold, but you can't find a way to put a card into your graveyard. A third draft sees you with much better cards than your opponent, but you're always on the defensive, never able to bring your card advantage and better creatures to bear. And you didn't have a chance against Cabal Patriarch or the guy who always drew Narcissism.

Are you just unlucky? Or is there a common flaw to your draft game?

In Booster Draft, the winner of the draft is often determined before the first game is played. Each of the situations listed above is often a result of bad drafting, not bad drawing. Many people just take a list of card rankings, pick the best card in their colors from each pack, and assume that they've drafted a great deck. But would you ever hope to win a Constructed tournament with a random selection of good cards in two colors? In a Limited deck, just like in Constructed, you want a balance of spells and mana costs, a theme or direction to the deck, and ways to react to the varied threats your opponents may play. You may end up drafting an inferior card once in a while, but you'll end up with a superior deck.

Balanced Mix of Spells and Mana Costs

Everyone knows that a draft deck should be just 40 cards, including 17–18 land and at least 10–12 creatures, but there's more to it than that. A common mistake among beginning drafters is selecting a lot of cool creature-enhancement spells but not enough creatures. It doesn't matter how many Arcane Teachings you draft if you never draw any creatures to play them on.

Similarly, it doesn't matter how good your spells are if you can't play them. If you're playing a mostly blue deck with a few green cards, you don't want to draft cards like Anurid Barkripper with two green in their mana cost. With so few green spells, you'll be cutting back the number of Forests in your deck, which cuts back your chances of having two green mana on turn three to play the Barkripper. If your first few picks have double black in them, you should avoid double-mana cards in your other color to make your mana base more solid.

Even if you have the correct colors of mana, you'll still lose if you don't have enough of it or don't live long enough to play your spells. No matter how good your six-mana creatures and spells are, if you don't play at least a few spells before you play a sixth land, your chances of winning are slim. Aquamoeba and Crypt Keeper aren't particularly powerful on their own, but they are drafted fairly highly because there are very few decent black or blue two-mana creatures in their sets. To take advantage of more powerful and expensive spells, black and blue mages sacrifice some card quality in order to have early blockers.

Using your resources each turn is also important. If your deck has ten spells that cost four mana each, you'll likely only be able to play one of them a turn. When you have five or six mana in play, you'll end up "wasting" mana each turn because everything costs four.

For this reason, most high-level players sort their picks by mana cost (and sometimes by creature and non-creature) between each pack to give them a clear idea of what they need to fill out their deck. It's important to keep in mind how your deck is looking so you don't make a mistake, like picking a third Soul Scourge over your first Mesmeric Fiend.

Deck Direction and Theme

Early in the draft, it's important to figure out what you're trying to do with your deck. Is your deck going to lock up the ground and fly over for the win? Then you better make sure you're drafting walls and enough fliers. Do you have a bomb that you want to take advantage of? Then you want to set up board situations that will auto-win whenever you draw it.

If you have Overrun, you want to have a swarm of creatures when you draw it, no matter how big they are. This might mean passing Nantuko Calmer for Acorn Harvest or taking Cartographer over Refresh. If you're playing Divine Sacrament in a red-white deck, you want to have as many white creatures as possible, even if they aren't as good as red creatures you could have drafted. If bombs like these are critical to your game, you may want to draft cards such as Anarchist or Auramancer to recover them.

Be familiar with color archetypes and build around them. If you draft Cephalid Looter and Metamorphic Wurm early on, you're in good position to draft a threshold-discard deck, and your later picks should reflect that with Mental Note or Careful Study. If you draft two Repels and Krosan Avengers, you probably want a theme of fast creatures and bounce and should use later picks on Churning Eddy or Aven Fogbringer.

There are even subtler card interactions that can benefit a deck. If you're playing Wormfang Drake, you want to draft a bunch of two-mana creatures so that if you have the Drake in your opening hand, it can come out on turn three. Later on in the game, you want to have creatures with come-into-play effects so that you can benefit a second time if the Drake gets destroyed. Ironshell Beetle fits both these requirements and is a perfect complement to the Drake if you're drafting blue-green.

Auramancer is a card whose value depends entirely on these types of synergies, becoming extremely good if you have two Arcane Teachings or two Patriarch's Desires. It's the black-white player who takes Patriarch's Desire over the nominally better Morbid Hunger in anticipation of later drafting Auramancer who will be victorious.

Options and Answers

It's frustrating to lose to an opponent with a single card that beats everything you have, but frequently these situations can be handled with some creative sideboarding and skilled drafting. Often, players don't pay much attention to the last six or seven picks from a pack because they rarely make a difference, but they can become the key cards you need to handle an unexpected situation. You need to know where your deck is vulnerable and try to draft solutions.

Does your deck lack defense against flyers? Luckily, you realized that early and drafted Defy Gravity. Is Giant Warthog giving you a headache? The prepared drafter late-picks the normally inefficient Acceptable Losses or even Cagemail for that situation. Are you getting rushed by swarms of weenie creatures? Maybe you shouldn't have rare-drafted instead of taking Innocent Blood or Dwarven Grunt. Having trouble getting through your opponent's creature defenses? Look for Escape Artist, Frightcrawler, or even Face of Fear.

Sometimes you have to get creative with your sideboard. While everyone knows that Rancid Earth and Earth Rift are good against Squirrel Nest, they can also be good against cards like Overrun or Cabal Patriarch because they can deny your opponent that third source of colored mana. Other answers to expensive bombs are Unhinge and Skull Fracture—late picks that may force your opponent to discard his or her lands or sometimes even the bomb itself.

If your deck has trouble with a specific threat, try to draft some answers, even if they're off-color. If you're playing a blue-white deck, you know that you'll have trouble killing creatures, and with a lot of small utility creatures, you are very vulnerable to "pingers" like Cabal Torturer or Psionic Gift. You should look for late Lava Darts or Sonic Seizures that you can splash if necessary.

Basic Tricks of the Trade

The key to all these draft strategies is thinking about them from the beginning of the draft, not when there are only three picks remaining and you realize that you can't deal with enchantments or have no spells that you can play on the second turn. If you need to splash a third color after sideboarding, you have to know to draft mana-fixers (such as Seafloor Debris or Skycloud Egg) as early as the first pack.

One of the simplest ways to improve your draft is to remember what cards you pass, especially potential sideboard cards. You often want enchantment removal in your sideboard, but do you take the Simplify for your green-white deck, or do you take the Cartographer? Hopefully, you've been paying attention to the packs, and you know that there was a Ray of Distortion that will likely come back as an eleventh pick, so you can take the creature knowing that you'll still be able to remove enchantments. If you've seen Angelic Wall in an early pack, you pass the Phantom Whelp knowing that your blue-white deck will get some early defense when the Wall circles the table.

In the smaller sets, there are often multiple copies of the same card in the draft. Slow white decks want to make sure that they have at least one Teroh's Faithful so that they can recover from early creature damage. If you know that your opening pack had a Faithful that will likely come back to you, you don't need to pick one seventh over a card you'd rather have. More importantly, if you notice three Faithfuls going around that will likely get to you, you can draft more offensive cards, knowing that you'll lock up the ground at a reasonable life total.

By studying all the cards that you pass, you can also gain an advantage in game play because you know what cards are out there that might hurt your strategy. A good player with Overrun will remember a Moment's Peace that didn't come back and play around it. A great player will also notice the Equal Treatment (a more obscure answer to Overrun) that didn't return and play around that. Either player should consider counter-drafting these cards to clear a path to victory.

Conclusion

The best drafters aren't just people who get lucky, they're people who pay attention to all facets of their game from the beginning of the draft. With experience, they've discovered how to balance their decks, build on synergies and themes, and recognize threats to their plans that need dealing with. While these tips are only the beginning and sound very simple, they are the cornerstones of becoming a top-level drafter. And as I know firsthand, great drafting can often make up for mistakes later in the game.

Birds, Bodyguards & Breakthrough

White-Blue in Block Constructed

by Brian Kibler

Most players' immediate reaction to a set's release is to pore over the new cards to figure out what could be used to update existing decks. They look for synergies between the new cards and their current strategies, and they usually find at least a few standouts that are the subject of wild speculation before they're even legal for Constructed play. *Judgment* has a number of these cards, from the Wishes and Incarnations to Phantom Centaur and—most prominently—Quiet Speculation. While all of these cards are quite powerful and will likely have a significant impact on tournament play, it's not always the flashy effects that turn out to be the most important players in Constructed.

Look back at *Odyssey,* for example. The most hyped card in the set was clearly Shadowmage Infiltrator, Jon Finkel's Invitational card from his win in Sydney. The "Fear-Ophidian" was expected to dominate Standard, and some players went so far as to claim that its existence was a mistake. Look at Standard today, however—or even *Odyssey* Block Constructed—and Jon's mug is almost nowhere to be seen. Why? The biggest reason is a lowly common few people thought much of when the set was first released, but have since learned to respect and fear—Wild Mongrel. This little dog might not have looked like much to people reading the spoiler, but once people played with him, they realized just how good he could be. Pretty soon, he started showing up in Constructed decks left and right—the rest, of course, is history.

Block Constructed formats have a tendency to look a lot like their Draft counterparts in terms of powerful archetypes. Masques block was dominated by Rebels, both in Constructed and in Limited, *Invasion* block by "bears" that could slip under Repulse and Exclude, and *Odyssey* block, as Osaka showed us, by green-blue madness and threshold decks. Powerful rares and uncommons, of course, have a tendency to swing the balance of power away from the archetypes created by the block's staple commons, but it's still useful to look at cards that are powerful in Limited to see if they have a role in Block Constructed.

One card that didn't leap out immediately from the pages of spoiler lists was Battle Screech. It seems benign enough. A four-mana sorcery that can create four 1/1 token creatures brings back memories of Pro Tour 1 and Eric Tam's Icatian Town, and back then everyone gave him grief for playing with it. Give those token creatures flying, however, and it's another story entirely. Drafters quickly learned to fear the Screech in Limited, and soon enough, people started experimenting with it in Constructed.

In a format full of hyper-efficient creatures like Wild Mongrel, Nantuko Shade, and Roar of the Wurm, a card that creates a bunch of 1/1 creatures doesn't seem very powerful, especially when it doesn't do it until turn four. Indeed, the tokens created by Battle Screech would be entirely unexciting if it weren't for two important details: they fly, and they're white. The former is an obvious advantage, one that is made less powerful and more important by the presence of Wonder in the format, while the latter is a bonus because of Divine Sacrament.

White Weenie
- OBC, July 2002 -

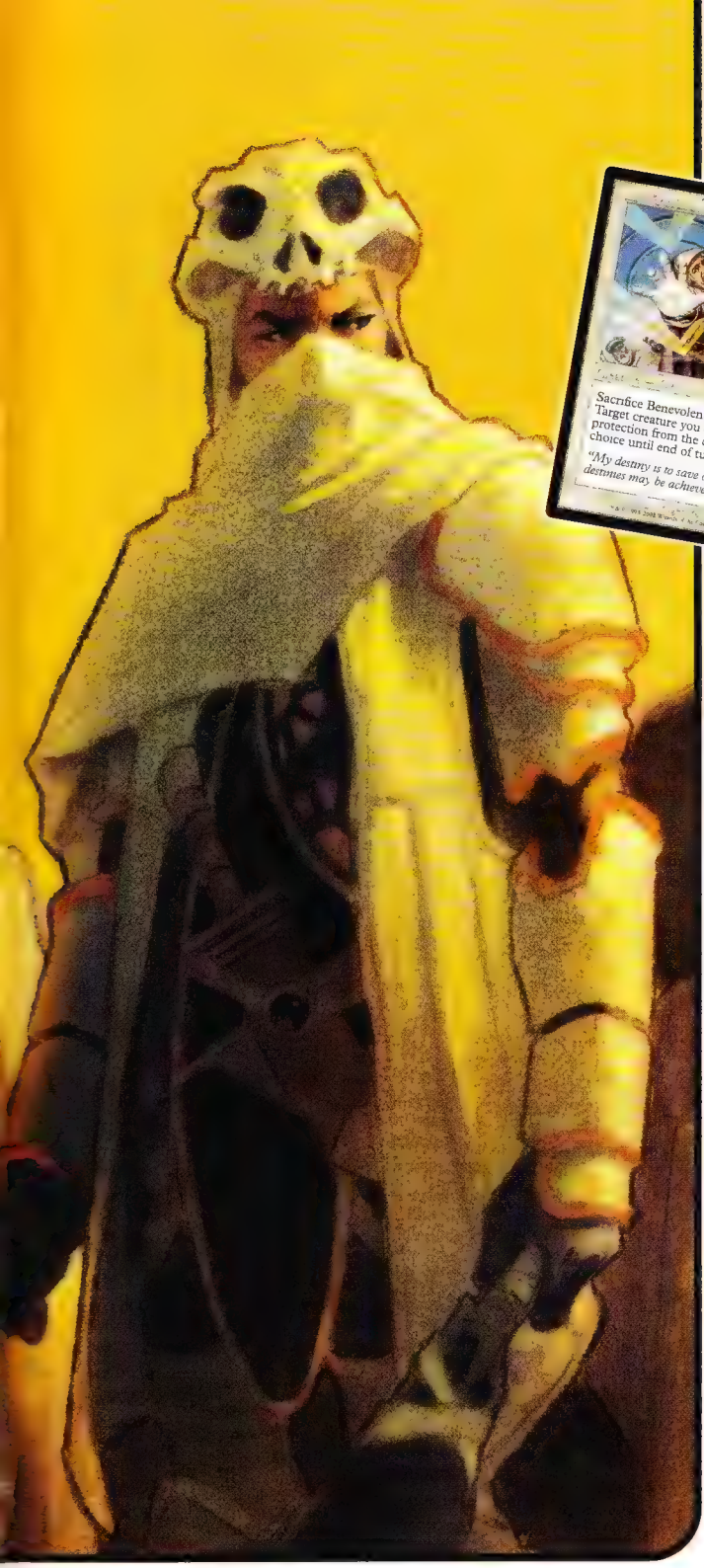
4	Beloved Chaplain
4	Benevolent Bodyguard
3	Mystic Visionary
4	Phantom Nomad
2	Pianna, Nomad Captain
4	Suntail Hawk
4	Battle Screech
2	Breakthrough
1	Deep Analysis
4	Divine Sacrament
1	Prismatic Strands
3	Quiet Speculation
3	Island
17	Plains
4	Skycloud Expanse

Historically speaking, small white creatures have had it better than their counterparts in other colors, but recently they seem to have gotten the short end of the stick. *Judgment* has gone a long way toward reviving the "White Weenie" deck, and Battle Screech is one of the cards that make it possible. Combined with Sacrament, the best Crusade-type effect to come along in a while, those 1/1 tokens turn into a short clock for your opponent, and the fact that they fly makes them that much more difficult to deal with.

If Battle Screech is the *Judgment* card that makes White Weenie viable in Block Constructed, Quiet Speculation is the card that makes it abusive. By now, everyone knows about the raw power of using Quiet Speculation to get Roar of the Wurm. After all, who can turn down a seemingly endless supply of 6/6 creatures? The only problem is that this process is somewhat slow. You have to spend a turn in the early game playing Speculation, and then four mana for each 6/6 you want to produce. While four mana for a Wurm is hardly prohibitive, the speed of the format combined with the fragility of these token creatures can lead to the Speculation player being overrun.

Battle Screech, however, has a flashback cost that involves no actual payment of mana, only the tapping of three white creatures you control. Combined with Quiet Speculation, this can lead to some quick starts. First turn Benevolent Bodyguard, second turn Phantom Nomad, third turn Suntail Hawk and Speculation for Screeches, fourth turn Screech, then flash it back along with two more Screeches. That's a pretty optimal draw, but it creates eight tokens on your fourth turn—not something most decks can easily handle.

White creatures get +1 +1
Threshold — White creatures get an additional +1 +1. (You have threshold as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)
Their whispered prayers rally the nomads better than any war cry could.
Put two 1/1 white Bird creature tokens with flying into play.
Flashback—Tap three untapped white creatures you control. (You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)
JOHN AVON



Sacrifice Benevolent Bodyguard: Target creature you control gains protection from the color of your choice until end of turn.
"My destiny is to save others so that their destinies may be achieved."
1/1
Phantom Nomad comes into play with two +1 +1 counters on it.
If damage would be dealt to Phantom Nomad, prevent that damage. Remove a +1 +1 counter from Phantom Nomad.
0/0

Not only does Quiet Speculation offer the potential for the exploitation of Battle Screech, but it can also be used as a tutor. More typical green-blue Speculation decks have access to Deep Analysis, Krosan Reclamation, and Moment's Peace, all of which can be potent in specific situations. Deep Analysis is still available, and one ought to be included to help the deck draw out of poor hands. White doesn't offer as many attractive options as green, but one standout is Prismatic Strands. Again, Limited play often shows how powerful a card can be, and Strands is among the best tricks in Draft, largely because its flashback cost doesn't involve mana. Green-blue decks intending to use Moment's Peace to win a race need to leave mana open to do so, which can prevent them from bolstering their board position. Prismatic Strands not only allows you to fully commit your resources without worry, but it can also counter damage-based removal or make advantageous trades in combat, as it only prevents damage dealt by sources of a single color. It can serve largely the same function as Moment's Peace does in the green-blue deck, while providing a solution to problematic cards like Howling Gale, which could take out your entire Bird army.

The remainder of the deck should be constructed in typical White Weenie fashion, with careful consideration given to the mana curve to allow abusive Screech draws whenever possible. There are a number of possible routes to take on the creature base, and the decisions depend largely on whether one intends to use Glory or not. A Glory-based creature selection would have to include Patrol Hound and likely Tireless Tribe in order to have enough discard effects to land the Incarnation in the graveyard consistently. While Glory is extremely powerful, it seems as though its inclusion in this deck might be redundant, as its primary purpose is to provide an evasive route to victory. Battle Screech already provides a potent, evasive kill mechanism, so Glory would probably be unneeded, except in mirror matches where the tokens cannot punch through.

With Tireless Tribe getting the boot, the available one-drops worth considering are Benevolent Bodyguard, Suntail Hawk, and Devoted Caretaker. All of them have useful abilities, and the Caretaker has the bonus of an extra point of toughness. Despite this bonus, however, the Caretaker's ability is the least likely to come into play in an aggressive deck such as this one, which would rather be spending all of its mana and attacking with all of its creatures every turn. The evasion of Suntail Hawk is far from trivial, and the sacrifice ability of Benevolent Bodyguard can save your more important creatures from bounce or removal. As far as two-drops go, there's nothing as impressive as Wild Mongrel, but Phantom Nomad can't be counted out, especially because Divine Sacrament means it will never die to damage. Because discard abilities aren't especially useful to the deck, Patrol Hound gets edged out by Mystic Visionary, who becomes a flying monster at threshold. Beloved Chaplin gets the last slot, as his protection from creatures ability makes him both a defensive powerhouse and an evasive threat, despite his small stature. The only three-drops worth the mana are the Crusade effects, both in enchantment form and with legs. Pianna, Nomad Captain would be a definite four-of if it weren't for its Legendary status, but as it is the deck can only afford to play two because of the threat of drawing useless duplicates.

It's tempting to try to play some of the powerful blue cards like Æther Burst and Circular Logic to support an aggro-control strategy, but with so many early white creatures and double white-mana spells, it seems like minimizing the blue component of the deck to ensure mana consistency is more important. One attractive thing about this deck is that it features two allied colors, allowing it to use the filter lands from *Odyssey*. Without access to such dual lands, decks like green-blue often have difficulties with their mana—difficulties so significant that they drove Ken Ho to play the much-maligned Tarnished Citadel in his Pro Tour–Osaka-winning deck. Keeping the blue component down to Speculation, Deep Analysis, and two copies of Breakthrough—which reloads your hand in the midgame and can be a quick threshold enabler to "turn on" Sacrament—greatly reduces the potential for mana problems.

This deck is extremely powerful, but has one gaping hole: Mutilate. Because its strategy is designed around the ability to present an overwhelming force quickly, mass removal effects can be devastating, and Mutilate is one that cannot be circumvented with Prismatic Strands. Sideboarding Envelop, or perhaps running it main deck, could help prevent Mutilate from completely ruining your day, but as it stands, your flock of Birds is very vulnerable to the "black Wrath".

Overall, this deck seems like it has a great deal of potential to perform well in the *Odyssey* Block Constructed environment. Its combination of quick aggression and evasion is difficult for many decks to deal with. It can often overwhelm opponents before they have any chance to implement their own strategies. Expect the Pro Tour Qualifier season leading up to Pro Tour–Houston to look like some sort of cross between *Tremors,* Hitchcock's *The Birds,* and *Swamp Thing,* with Roar of the Wurm and Battle Screech tokens fighting it out for superiority amidst a sea of black. It'll be interesting to see what flick comes out on top.

Blue-Green Power

Zvi Speculates on Odyssey Block

by Zvi Mowshowitz

With World Championships and the *Odyssey* Block Constructed qualifier season both weeks away, and my preparations for Worlds just now getting underway in earnest, it's hard to tell what the environment will really look like. My current idea of the metagame can be described as a best guess. One of the decks that I've been working on has been winning, and the version I'll talk about here seems to have some advantages over more traditional builds. If I had to play in Worlds today, this is the deck I would use. In a decision that should be a great surprise to no one, I would be playing a blue-green deck with Quiet Speculation.

The one thing that seems certain is that Quiet Speculation will be the most important card in the format. The best deck is going to involve Quiet Speculation and Roar of the Wurm, with everyone who doesn't use that engine focused on fighting it, and everyone who does use it thinking first about the mirror match. The deck has cards it fears, but its ability to search out any flashback card it needs after sideboarding will let it deal with many of them without using many sideboard slots to do so. In addition, the engine is based on searching for Roar of the Wurm, so any deck that tries to go after the token creatures is going to run into not only ways to defend the tokens, but also alternative ways to use Quiet Speculation. The first plan with Quiet Speculation is to get Roar, but a solid Plan B is to get Deep Analysis, and there are many other options.

Still, players will attack the deck's main engine. They will attack the graveyard, they will attack the token creatures, and they will plain old attack for 2. In addition to dealing with the core engine, though, there will almost always be a second problem to deal with. Thanks to Wild Mongrel and Wonder, most versions of the deck will be able to assemble an undercosted flying army. The only question left is what players will do with the last third of the deck. Aside from the mana, there's one section for flashback spells and Quiet Speculation and a second one for Wonder and Wild Mongrel. There are several ways to finish the deck. You can go the discard and madness route with Aquamoeba, Arrogant Wurm, Circular Logic, and Basking Rootwalla. You can fight the graveyard war even more efficiently by using Catalyst Stone and more flashback spells. You can protect your tokens with Sylvan Safekeeper and attack your opponent's with Æther Burst.

Currently, I like to go for the graveyard plan without focusing too much on flashback. With both Catalyst Stone and Envelop already rising in popularity in my playtest group, basing an entire game plan on Wurm tokens is a risk I'd rather not take. I don't want to play Catalyst Stone if I don't have to, because it can mean playing too many mana sources in matchups where the opponent doesn't play with many flashback cards. I also don't want to risk having dead hands when opponents play Catalyst Stone or remove my flashback cards from the graveyard. Instead, I decided to take advantage of the fact that the deck already has nine cards that are worth putting in the graveyard—one Deep Analysis, four Roar of the Wurm, and four copies of Wonder. In my testing, finding Wonder was proving to be important in several matchups, and it could not be searched for.

As a solution, I added Careful Study, Predict, Mental Note, and Millikin to the deck. Careful Study is a staple in these decks because they have many cards they want to discard. Millikin provides mana acceleration and puts cards into the graveyard. Predict and Mental Note also put cards into the graveyard and shrink the deck. With these cards in place, Wonder is much easier to find, and the deck gets to threshold quickly. That opened the door for Krosan Beast. Now the deck can put out large men even without Roar of the Wurm, and those large men are very good at fighting with 6/6 Wurm tokens. Combined with the extra card drawing and the frequent milling of a Roar, the deck is much more consistent at pumping out multiple giant green men than other versions are.

U/G Speculation
- OBC, July 2002 -

4	Krosan Beast
4	Millikin
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Wonder
4	Æther Burst
4	Careful Study
1	Deep Analysis
4	Mental Note
1	Predict
4	Quiet Speculation
1	Ray of Revelation
4	Roar of the Wurm
9	Forest
12	Island

sideboard

1	Acorn Harvest
1	Alter Reality
2	Brawn
1	Deep Analysis
1	Genesis
1	Grizzly Fate
1	Howling Gale
2	Krosan Reclamation
2	Moment's Peace
1	Ray of Revelation
2	Sylvan Safekeeper

The way the deck is built now, Quiet Speculation seems like another nail in the opponent's coffin rather than the basis of the deck. Even if Speculation were not in the deck, it would be very good at what it does. There are even games where Speculation goes unplayed because it is more efficient to play Krosan Beasts than search for Roar tokens. Playing Quiet Speculation on turn two or three is still great, but often there are even better options. Quiet Speculation often waits until turn five or so, which also lets the deck wait and see if it needs to search out other cards instead of Roar of the Wurm.

Since I created the deck, I've been tuning it and trying out some alternate cards in the last few slots. Right now, I favor Æther Burst. The deck tends to mill a huge number of cards, often allowing the first Æther Burst you play to bounce two or three creatures if you do it in the mid to late game. I worry a little about letting the opponent's Bursts go large as well, but for now I think it's worth it. There's no question that you can use the bounce, and I've been underwhelmed by the alternatives. It's also worth noting that the mana in these decks is lousy, but there is no way to solve that problem. Tarnished Citadel is the only land even worth considering. Right now, the build I favor is the one I've listed.

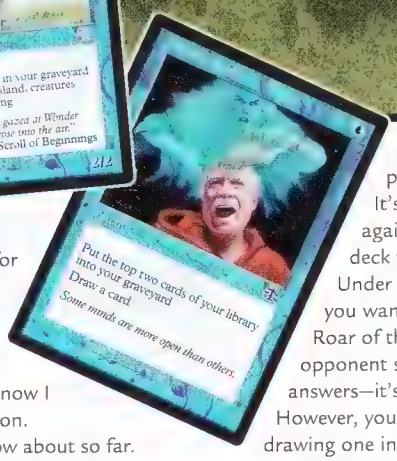
If I had more slots in the main deck, I would add more Predicts or slip in one or two copies of Brawn. Brawn functions as a kind of fifth Wonder. It prevents people from effectively chump-blocking Wurm tokens and Beasts, even with flyers like Battle Screech tokens. For now, Predict and Brawn have been cut in order to make room for Æther Burst. The sideboard was chosen to get the most effect out of each slot, since almost everything there has flashback. Brawn is there

KEV WALKER
Search target player's library for up to three cards with flashback and put them into that player's graveyard. Then the player shuffles his or her library.
"The best foresight is hindsight."
-Empress Llawan
Target player draws two cards.
Flashback—1, Pay 3 life. (You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)
"This specimen seems to be broken."

for decks that use small creatures that can chump block your larger ones. Genesis is generally useful if a matchup goes long, and Sylvan Safekeeper helps shield your creatures against any decks that use targeted removal. Next, I will explain what each of the flashback cards is most likely to accomplish.

Moment's Peace provides defense against creature decks that try to use Glory or a huge number of creatures to get through for the kill before your big creatures can finish the job. Ray of Revelation is standard-issue enchantment removal if anything problematic should come up. Howling Gale's main target is Battle Screech, but the existence of Wonder allows it to attack Sylvan Safekeeper and Basking Rootwalla in other blue-green decks, or even entire assault teams. I'm not sure that it should definitely come in against blue-green, but it can be a consideration. Alter Reality's primary target is Divine Sacrament, which is showing up a lot in our early testing, but there are probably other cards this is worth using on. Acorn Harvest is for Innocent Blood and Chainer's Edict, forcing the monoblack deck to Mutilate before it can go after the big game. Deep Analysis is too good an alternative plan not to have the option to go up to two, with the second one being cut from the main deck quite recently. Krosan Reclamation goes after other Quiet Speculation decks, removing Wonder and Roar of the Wurm, and it can also take out Glory and several other less-expected targets. Grizzly Fate is a wildcard. Played from the hand, it can generate four tokens for five mana, which is a great deal. It's harder to play it from the graveyard, but you don't search for it unless you can play it. I'm not sure when it comes in, but for now I like the idea of having it as an option.

Flying
As long as Wonder is in your graveyard and you control an island, creatures you control have flying
"The awestruck birds gazed at Wonder Secret, toned v. thes. rise into the air."
—Scroll of Beginnings



Now for the matchups that I know about so far. The mirror is the most important. You'll want Krosan Reclamation and you may want Sylvan Safekeeper. Æther Burst is good if your opponent is vulnerable, but if he or she is in full Burst war-mode with Safekeeper and Bursts of his or her own, I'd rather take mine out. The Krosan Beasts should give a natural advantage, but other versions of the deck will have important cards like Catalyst Stone that this version doesn't use. If you find a good way to win the mirror, take this sideboard apart and spare no expense to make it happen.

In other matchups, you want to keep the deck mostly intact, so sideboard with a light touch. Against monoblack you have Genesis, Deep Analysis, and Acorn Harvest. For white you have Howling Gale, Alter Reality, Moment's Peace, and perhaps one Krosan Reclamation for Glory. White-green is similar to monowhite. Red-green should be in serious trouble regardless, but Moment's Peace is probably good insurance. It's also the best defense against Firecat Blitz, if that deck turns up anywhere. Under no circumstances do you want to pull more than one Roar of the Wurm, even if your opponent seems to have all the answers—it's just too good. However, you could reason that drawing one instead of searching for it might not be worthwhile in some matchups, so going down to three seems practical in some situations. Psychatog is one matchup where Æther Burst is more dangerous than helpful, but also keep in mind that Upheaval is a clock you have to race. Keep it offensive. Against a Braids, Cabal Minion deck, this sideboard doesn't offer much, but both Acorn Harvest and Genesis should be of some use.

By the time you read this, I will have played in Worlds and revealed the results of weeks of testing. There will also be some qualifiers on the books. I don't know what changes those tournaments will bring to the metagame, so keep an open mind. I even expect the metagame to change radically from week to week, as there are many mind games in the format involving Æther Burst and the popularity of the dominant deck. To win, you will have to stay on alert.

Psychatog Strategy

The Newest Version of this Amazing Deck

by Ben Rubin

As *Judgment* joins Standard, there are two questions that spring to mind. First, will the best decks still reign supreme? Second, will the hyped cards turn out to be as good as they appear to be? Examining the new possibilities for Psychatog is a great start to answering both questions.

Pre-*Judgment,* there were many takes on how to build what was often called the best deck in Standard. Some were straight blue-black, usually sporting Standstill or Probe to complement Fact or Fiction. Others splashed red for Flametongue Kavu and Fire/Ice, giving them answers to problem creatures like Merfolk Looter. Some players decided that Looter was good enough to play alongside Psychatog and Nightscape Familiar.

So, what changes? There are some new problem cards for Psychatog, most notably Phantom Centaur and Quiet Speculation. Centaur, at 2 {G}{G}, isn't hard to counter, Repulse can bounce it if it gets through, and Upheaval also rids you of the Centaur for a while. So what's the big deal? On its own, the Centaur is a piece of cake. As a complement to an aggressive deck that Psychatog regularly falls behind against, he is a monster.

The great power in a control deck like Psychatog is that it can reliably come back and take control after ceding a temporal advantage to the opponent. They can play a Llanowar Elves, a Wild Mongrel, and a Call of the Herd before you have any nonland permanents and it's not unreasonable to come back and win.

In other circumstances, the Psychatog player counters a few threats and then lets one resolve in order to play Fact or Fiction, only to reload, deal with the threat and keep control. Unfortunately, in the case of the Centaur, dealing with it usually means Repulsing it (which you must often protect from a counter of your opponent's) and then countering it when it tries to come back. It's also possible to Flametongue and Fire/Ice it slowly to death, but both approaches are fragile and unreliable. This is all complicated when you're on the ropes and don't yet have the mana to profitably escape with an Upheaval.

Quiet Speculation presents a different problem. Roar of the Wurm seems like the card most likely to be fetched by Speculation, meaning three 6/6 tokens. Of course you can Repulse or Recoil one as a "free" answer, but you've only got so many bounce spells. Blocking with Nightscape Familiar and Psychatog will deal with one or two of them, but this cramps your resources a lot, especially considering that inflicting all this pain on you is only costing your opponent one card. Again, even Upheaval won't do much good against the countermagic in Quiet Speculation decks. Speculation can also tutor up Deep Analysis, providing six new cards.

Luckily, Psychatog gets to add two of the most powerful cards in *Judgment*—Cunning and Burning Wish. Cunning Wish is the more obvious addition because it's in the deck's core color and because it has many obvious cards to fetch, including Slay, Aura Graft, Recoil, Exclude, Teferi's Response, Psychotic Haze, and many others.

Psychatog

- with both Wishes -

4	Flametongue Kavu
4	Nightscape Familiar
4	Psychatog
2	Burning Wish
3	Circular Logic
3	Counterspell
3	Cunning Wish
4	Fact or Fiction
2	Fire/Ice
3	Memory Lapse
3	Repulse
6	Island
2	Mountain
2	Salt Marsh
4	Shivan Reef
2	Sulfurous Springs
2	Swamp
3	Underground River
4	Urborg Volcano

sideboard

1	Aura Graft
1	Chainer's Edict
1	Divert
1	Exclude
1	Fire/Ice
1	Haunting Echoes
1	Hibernation
1	Mana Short
1	Opportunity
1	Pyroclasm
1	Rushing River
1	Slay
1	Teferi's Response
1	Upheaval
1	Void

Before Cunning Wish, there were situations that Psychatog decks couldn't break out of, most importantly the soft lock created by Squirrel-Opposition. Now the 'Tog player can fetch Aura Graft, Recoil, and Teferi's Response to deal with the problem, or Hibernation/Psychotic Haze when things get hairy. Psychotic Haze can also be used to deal with the hordes produced by Goblin Trenches. Slay deals with Yavimaya Barbarian without requiring red mana.

The list of options for Burning Wish is shorter, but certainly includes its share of potential bombs. This Wish makes you branch out into red, but gives you Pyroclasm, Void, Persecute, Duress, Upheaval, Haunting Echoes, Obliterate, Chainer's Edict, or Rancid Earth.

My favorite aspect of this Wish is that it means not having to play the powerful, but often unusable, Upheaval. Burning Wish gives you great discard options against control decks and removal spells to permanently deal with creatures like Mystic Enforcer and Phantom Centaur. The problem with Burning Wish is that it gives you a pretty narrow (and sorcery-speed) set of options with which to combat creatures in this very creature-heavy format.

While Haunting Echoes can help against Quiet Speculation, and Void and Edict are sometimes answers against Phantom Centaur, Burning Wish's modest ability to deal with 'Tog's new problems pales in comparison to Cunning Wish's ability to answer old problems. Although it's possible to play both in the same deck, sideboard space and temporal efficiency (along with Fact or Fiction, how many search cards can a deck play?) suggest that only one of the Wishes be used per Psychatog build. Still, I couldn't help but incorporate them both into one of my first post-*Judgment* Standard decks.

This deck was powerful, though a bit clunky, and did well against red-green, Squirrel-Opposition, and various rogue decks. This was before the addition of Phantom Centaur to our green deck.

With the 5/3 protection from black Phantom running around, this deck was no longer winning its fair share of games. Coupled with previous threats, the Centaur made their attack too heavy, too quickly for me to take control before my life dropped to burn range. New additions to Psychatog came to mind, particularly one played by Antoine Ruel in Grand Prix–Sao Paulo. I've included the list for my take on 'Tog with Pernicious Deed.

Reveal the top five cards of your library. An opponent separates those cards into two face-up piles. Put one pile into your hand and the other into your graveyard.

When Flametongue Kavu comes into play, it deals 4 damage to target creature.
"For dim-witted, thick-skulled genetic mutants, they have pretty good aim."
—Sissay

Discard a card from your hand: Psychatog gets +1/+1 until end of turn.
Remove two cards in your graveyard from the game: Psychatog gets +1/+1 until end of turn.

This conglomerate of spells and lands includes a few untraditional choices whose strength you may have to take my word for. I will be concentrating on the major tradeoffs between this build and other Psychatog builds.

First of all, Pernicious Deed is one of the most powerful cards in Standard. For blue-black 'Tog players, holding the ground in the early game is difficult because many of his or her defensive tools are narrow—counterspells don't do much about creatures in play. While blue-black has bounce spells and Cunning Wish to complement countermagic, an early creature assault creates an uphill battle for two-color designs. In 'Tog decks utilizing Fire/Ice and Flametongue Kavu, the job is easier, but the battle is still fought on the aggressive player's terms. Playing a Flametongue Kavu means risking being Flametongued right back. Trying to hold the ground with Psychatog and Familiar is also difficult because cards like Repulse, Violent Eruption, and Fire/Ice can delay your defenses. With Pernicious Deed out, though, your opponent can't afford to commit enough early creatures to beat you before you take control. What they must do is force you to activate Deed and then play a *new* army. By that time, you will be equipped with your more powerful spells like Cunning Wish, Fact or Fiction, and Psychatog. Even better, you have cheap countermagic to rob them of the opportunity to resolve rivaling powerful spells.

Incidentally, Phantom Centaur and Quiet Speculation are not so good when you can blow up all permanents in play with a single card. In Speculation's case, zero-mana cost Wurm tokens can be dealt with fairly painlessly by Deed and Repulse. Should the Speculation player decide to go for card advantage by way of Deep Analysis, Pernicious Deed will allow you to clear the board and take the initiative with your Psychatog or Spiritmonger, an important thing to do when your opponent trades in life for cards.

Because of Deed, there are fewer Psychatogs and Nightscape Familiars in this build. While this might seem like a downside of this design, consider how many decks include red mana for Flametongue Kavu and Fire/Ice. Familiars and 'Togs are not the gems they used to be, and you will still have them to play in the late game, where they are more sturdy (you will have more cards in your graveyard to save the 'Tog and more mana to regenerate the Familiar).

On a somber note, this deck requires the use of many pain lands, meaning that you'll have to budget your life total. In a blue-black build, this is not a real problem; with a red splash it's bad, but not as bad because you have access to Urborg Volcano as well as other multi-lands instead of being forced to use either pain lands or basic Forests for green mana. All of the pain land damage can be particularly bad for players who never got used to damaging themselves on a regular basis. For those of us who are a little more pragmatic, this mana base is not a bad price to pay for the addition of Pernicious Deed.

Some more bad news is that this deck does not have room (or justification, in my opinion) to run Upheaval. Against aggressive decks, this is no problem, but against dedicated control decks, having no serious threat to play on your turn is bad news. Additionally, Familiars are powerful against other Psychatog decks, and theirs will probably outnumber yours four to two. Alas, Pernicious Deed is not so hot against opposing Psychatog builds, though it can solve a lot of the problem enchantments played by other control strategies. Still, I consider this to be the best way to play Psychatog in the new Standard. If nothing else, it will show you how powerful Cunning Wish is.

Speaking of the Wish, sideboarding is not so easy with this deck (in fact, if you do not consider yourself at least a decent control player, I would wait before trying to pilot this deck in a tournament, it takes a lot of patience to play correctly).

Against the most aggressive decks, take out the Wishes and put in the cards that you think will help you most. Adding the Opportunity is not a bad idea.

Against more diverse strategies, keep the tutoring power of the Wish in your deck. With it and Deed at your disposal, decks like Squirrel-Opposition that try to use their cards in combination will find life impossible against your disruptive capabilities—just look out for Static Orb.

Against dedicated control decks, remove some Deeds and Repulses, remembering that you can Wish for answers to any surprise sideboard plans, and bring in Loosters and Centaurs. Whether your opponent is ready for them or not, they will give you the threats that you lack in game 1.

As far as changing this deck around, I have not played it in a major tournament and will not, therefore, swear by any of my decisions in putting this together. You might consider Execute and Teferi's Response for the sideboard, as well as Upheaval for the main deck if your local metagame suggests it. Otherwise, play your heart out with what I consider to be one of the best decks available in the new Type 2.

Psychatog

- with Deed -

2	Nightscape Familiar
3	Psychatog
1	Spiritmonger
2	Circular Logic
4	Counterspell
4	Cunning Wish
4	Fact or Fiction
2	Force Spike
4	Memory Lapse
2	Peek
4	Pernicious Deed
4	Repulse
2	Forest
7	Island
4	Llanowar Wastes
4	Salt Marsh
3	Swamp
1	Underground River
4	Yavimaya Coast

sideboard

1	Aura Graft
1	Divert
1	Exclude
1	Ghastly Demise
1	Hibernation
3	Merfolk Looter
1	Opportunity
3	Phantom Centaur
1	Psychotic Haze
1	Rushing River
1	Slay

Discarding for Fun and Profit

Madness in Standard

by Brian Kibler

Research & Development has made a habit of introducing powerful cards that shake up Constructed formats in the third set of a block, and it seems that with *Judgment* they have made no exception. The green-white set is chock full of powerful cards for Constructed play, some of which, like Phantom Centaur, pose new kinds of problems for many of the preexisting decks, and others, like the Wishes, are so radical that they will force tournament players to completely reevaluate the way they design their decks and sideboards. Following in the footsteps of *Apocalypse,* which breathed new life into opposing color combinations, *Judgment* has big shoes to fill. If initial impressions are anything close to accurate, however, it seems more than likely that *Judgment* will live up to expectations.

While *Judgment* cards are sure to have a big impact on Standard play, nothing short of an *Urza's Saga*-like set could remove the imprint that *Invasion* block still has on the Standard environment. Cards like Flametongue Kavu, Fact or Fiction, and Repulse largely define the Standard format, despite the beliefs of those who decry Psychatog and Upheaval as the roots of all the world's problems. These *Invasion* block cards have had such a large impact on deck construction since their release that many cards and strategies that might otherwise have been extremely powerful went unplayed, as they simply could not compete. Efficient 4-toughness creatures like Serra Angel and Lightning Angel gathered dust as the threat of Flametongue Kavu kept them from ever seeing widespread play. Non-blue based control strategies simply crumbled in the face of the card advantage of Fact or Fiction, and strategies revolving around getting a single big creature into play, like "Reanimator", fell apart in the face of the ever-present Repulse.

R/U/G Madness

- Standard 2002 -

3	Aquamoeba
3	Arrogant Wurm
4	Flametongue Kavu
4	Merfolk Looter
4	Phantom Centaur
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Circular Logic
3	Deep Analysis
4	Fire/Ice
4	Repulse
3	Forest
5	Island
3	Karplusan Forest
2	Mossfire Valley
3	Shivan Oasis
3	Shivan Reef
4	Yavimaya Coast

Designing decks for Standard with the inclusion of *Judgment,* then, must both respect the power of the new cards while giving a nod to the format-defining cards and strategies of old. As Nationals around the world as well as the European Championships showed us, Psychatog has yet to let go of his crown, and the new tools our toothy friend gets to work with in *Judgment*—Cunning Wish and Burning Wish—promise to be quite potent. They provide 'Tog decks with answers to cards that would otherwise be problematic, like Recoil to deal with Squirrel Nest or Ghastly Demise to handle Merfolk Looter. Because of the Wishes, reliance on trying to find a hole in the Psychatog deck's armor has become a much less potent strategy. Whereas decks like "Squirrel-Opposition" and "Miss America" could formerly exploit the limited number of answers the Psychatog deck brought to the table, the versatility of "Wish-Tog" decks is limited only by their sideboard space.

The cost of this additional versatility, however, is a slight but significant time delay. The Wishes aren't free, and the mana spent finding the perfect answer is far from irrelevant in the early turns of the game. While this cost might not be especially significant in a battle between two slower, controlling decks, against an aggressive deck, playing spells that do not immediately affect the board can be costly. This is particularly true when facing an aggro-control deck featuring some kind of countermagic. A dedicated beatdown deck might spend that free turn the Psychatog player gave up by Wishing to get some damage in, but generally the Wished-for card—something like Hibernation—can more than make up for the time lost by the control player. An aggro-control deck can punish the Wishing Psychatog player not only by doing damage in the free turn provided by the Wish, but also by fighting the Wished-for spell with countermagic to maintain temporal advantage.

It is important to note that neither of the Wishes offers access to a particularly exciting solution to Phantom Centaur. The best options to deal with a resolved Centaur that can be Wished for are likely Hibernation and Alter Reality as far as instants go

When Flametongue Kavu comes into play, it deals 4 damage to target creature.
"For dim-witted, thick-skulled generic mutants, they have pretty good aim."
—Sisay
Arrogant Wurm
Trample
Madness 2 (You may play this card for its madness cost at the time you discard it from your hand.)
It's hard to be humble when the whole world is bite size.
Counter target spell unless its controller pays 1 for each card in your graveyard.
Madness (You may play this card for its madness cost at the time you discard it from your hand.)

and Chainer's Edict from the pool of sorceries—and the Edict only works if there aren't any other creatures in play on the same side of the board. While the Centaur can be countered or Repulsed, that's about the extent of the effective solutions to this particular problem, making it a particularly unwelcome threat to see across the table if you're playing Psychatog. Even 'Tog decks splashing red for Flametongue Kavu and Fire/Ice, which are generally much stronger against creature-based decks, can't effectively deal with a Phantom Centaur because of its near invulnerability to damage-based removal. This also makes the Centaur a monster against other creature decks like red-green and blue-green, where it can trade +1/+1 counters for opposing creatures in combat.

It would seem, then, that a blue-green-red aggro-control deck featuring Phantom Centaur would be well suited to the post-*Judgment* Standard environment. As Cunning Wish provides Psychatog with easy answers to Opposition and Squirrel Nest, using that particular strategy as a basis for the deck doesn't seem as attractive any longer. That leaves madness as the strategy of choice. *Torment*'s madness mechanic has proven to be extremely powerful as a source of both undercosted threats like Basking Rootwalla and Arrogant Wurm and as an engine for card advantage fueled by Merfolk Looter. U.S. Regional tournaments showcased the power of the strategy, where it qualified a huge number of players, but it wasn't until Blake Quelle's Top 8 at U.S. Nationals and Jurgen Hahn's Canadian Nationals win that the deck started receiving a lot of attention. Christophe Haim's second place finish at Euros, the last premiere event to use the pre-*Judgment* standard format, proved that the deck's success had not been a fluke, but even still the deck received little attention compared to the Squirrel-Opposition and Psychatog decks everyone was raving about on the Internet.

The most common argument against the effectiveness of the madness decks revolves around their dependence on madness enablers, such as Wild Mongrel and Merfolk Looter. Cards like Arrogant Wurm and Circular Logic are tremendously efficient when you have a way to discard them, but far less effective when played for their actual mana cost. This can lead to clunky draws when a Mongrel or Looter gets killed, but also to extremely degenerate starts if they survive. The sheer power of a turn three Arrogant Wurm—particularly if it can be protected from Flametongue Kavu on turn four with Circular Logic—seems to far outweigh the risk of having it sit in your hand for a few turns if your Mongrel happens to die. One can also play additional madness enablers like Aquamoeba to increase consistency and minimize the number of cards in the deck that require enablers to be effective. Violent Eruption, a common fixture in decks of this type, is a strain on the deck's mana base even at o1oRoR, and it's also nearly impossible to play without a madness enabler in play. Cutting the Eruption for the more consistent Fire/Ice not only reduces the deck's dependence on discard effects, but also lifts the enormous strain of supporting its mana cost.

Fire/Ice, Flametongue Kavu, and Repulse are among the removal effects that define the Standard format, and this deck makes use of all three. The threat of clearing away two 1-toughness creatures is enough to scare players away from committing multiple mana creatures to the board, making decks with a full complement of Llanowar Elves and Birds of Paradise a rare sight indeed. The ability to consistently destroy a second turn Merfolk Looter in an environment including both Roar of the Wurm and Arrogant Wurm is extremely important, and the Ice half of the split card is not inconsequential either. Flametongue Kavu requires no explanation, as its sheer power has been proven time and time again in the year and a half it has been legal. Repulse's stock has gone up considerably with the release of *Judgment*. With Quiet Speculation making Wurm tokens all the more common and Phantom Centaur shrugging off Flametongue Kavu and Fire alike, Repulse is an extremely important tool against opposing creature decks of all types.

Thanks to the Wishes, *Judgment* has players thinking about their sideboards early in the deck construction process, and even though this deck doesn't utilize any of the Wishes, that's no reason to neglect the sideboard possibilities. Another attractive reason to play an aggressive green-based creature deck in the post-*Judgment* environment, besides Phantom Centaur, is Seedtime. Taking an additional turn is an exciting prospect for any deck, but it's particularly powerful when you can take full advantage of the extra attack phase with Wild Mongrel and Arrogant Wurm on the board. If you're looking to punish your opponents for trying to Cunning Wish at the end of your turn, it doesn't get much better than that.

Another sideboard card that seems especially potent in the new environment is Unnatural Selection. The ability to destroy duplicate creatures in play by turning them into Legends is certainly a powerful way to deal with opposing Wild Mongrels, Merfolk Looters, and the like, but it is particularly useful as it provides a solution to Phantom Centaur, which is otherwise nearly indestructible. Jilt also provides a way to clear Phantom Centaurs or Wurm tokens off the board while sending their teammates to the graveyard. Simoon is a powerful tool against Squirrel-Opposition, as well as any other decks that play with a high number of 1-toughness creatures, and it has the added bonus of taking tokens off of opposing Phantom Centaurs. Gainsay supplements the counter base against Psychatog and other control decks, improving your ability to protect your important threats, and Hull Breach provides a catch-all answer to any enchantments and artifacts that might show up, from Ensnaring Bridge to Opposition.

All told, blue-green-red madness is the most attractive aggressive option available in post-*Judgment* Standard. It has efficient, hard-to-deal-with threats and makes use of the most powerful and versatile removal effects in the format, allowing it to compete with beatdown and control decks alike. If you enjoy attacking with green creatures—and you also enjoy winning—this is the deck for you.

✦REBECCA GUAY
Choose an instant card you own from outside the game, reveal that card, and put it into your hand. Remove Cunning Wish from the game.
He reached for knowledge, but not for the will to apply it.
1: Choose a creature type other than Wall. Target creature's type becomes that type until end of turn.
What nature makes, magic can modify.
Simoon
Simoon deals 1 damage to each creature target opponent controls.
Hot wind whipped up as if the weather itself wanted to fight Phyrexians.

The New Extended

Adjusting to the Changes

by Alex Shvartsman

In May, the DCI announced that on November 1, all cards up to and including the *Weatherlight* expansion will rotate out of the Extended format. Surely bad news for dual land fans everywhere, the upcoming rotation nevertheless creates a brand new format, offering players a rare chance to design a metagame from scratch because none of the popular decks survive the rotation unscathed. Let us examine what the rotation will do to the best decks in the contemporary Extended format:

OUT OF THE RUNNING

"Miracle Gro" is clearly the best deck in the format prior to the changes, but it is virtually gone in November. Even if it could somehow compensate for the loss of Force of Will, its extremely greedy mana base could not possibly survive without dual lands. While some of the other decks that do not know the meaning of the term "basic land"—such as "Junk" and Aluren—may be viable using pain lands and City of Brass, Miracle Gro will have breathed its last breath by the time the rotation goes into effect. "Secret Force" is also out of the equation with the loss of Natural Order.

Some of the other decks eliminated by the changes are Stasis (no more Stasis), "Trix" (no more Illusions of Grandeur), and "Pebbles" (no more Enduring Renewal). Monoblue control is down, but not out. It gets to keep Morphling and Masticore, and although the loss of Force of Will hurts badly, I am certain that blue-black or blue-white control will stick around. Monoblue is doable but less viable without the mighty Force.

"Sligh"

Aggressive monored decks have survived the fast-shifting Extended metagame and remained viable to one degree or another for as long as the format has existed. Although there is no doubt in my mind that the archetype will survive in some form, it was extremely hard-hit. The most important card that the deck loses is Fireblast. Even with the plethora of newer burn spells out there, nothing comes close to the raw power of Fireblast, which allows a monored deck to occasionally win as early as turn four. The second-most important card to disappear is Ball Lightning. Although some monored builds don't use this powerful damage-dealer, I believe it to be crucial to the Sligh archetype as we know it today.

Although the impact of the loss of those two cards is considerable, the potential shift in the kind of decks that populate the metagame may be even more devastating. With Oath of Druids recursion decks (though not the card itself, as we will discuss later) out of the format, more creature decks will show up. Rather than preying on control decks, Sligh players may be forced to face more Spike Feeders and Spiritmongers. The removal of dual lands will also force more people to play one- or two-color decks, which will mean less nonbasic land hanging around. In the past, Price of Progress single-handedly won many games for Sligh. Now it becomes a sideboard card at best.

There is some good news, too. The very best expansion for Sligh—*Tempest*—is still around. In order to survive, Sligh will likely need to morph from a burn-oriented control deck into the very fast creature weenie deck it was in the days of *Tempest* block. The deck could potentially look like my new version, "Reckless Sligh".

Oath of Druids

Aside from Force of Will, Oath of Druids has been one of the most important factors in the Extended metagame ever since Bob Maher won Pro Tour–Chicago with an Oath-powered control deck. Most Oath variants do not differ very much from either Maher's deck or Gary's deck, which is the one listed. However, such builds become impossible without Gaea's Blessing to reshuffle the library. The archetype may be gone, but Oath of Druids is too powerful a card to go away entirely. It should appear in a number of "Suicide Oath" decks, known as such because they have no way to reshuffle their library, but rather plan to win quickly with large creatures. "Stompy" designer Bill Macey played an interesting Oath variant at Grand Prix–Houston this year.

Oath
- Justin Gary -

2	Morphling
1	Spike Weaver
4	Brainstorm
4	Counterspell
2	Fact or Fiction
4	Force of Will
2	Gaea's Blessing
4	Impulse
4	Oath of Druids
3	Powder Keg
4	Swords to Plowshares
1	Sylvan Library
1	Thwart
1	Bad River
4	Flood Plain
3	Treetop Village
4	Tropical Island
4	Tundra
4	Volcanic Island
4	Wasteland

Oath
- Bill Macey -

4	Mystic Enforcer
1	Abundance
1	Armageddon
4	Chimeric Idol
4	Duress
4	Gerrard's Verdict
4	Oath of Druids
3	Pernicious Deed
4	Swords to Plowshares
4	Sylvan Library
4	Tithe
2	Vampiric Tutor
1	Wrath of God
4	Bayou
4	Grassland
4	Savannah
4	Scrubland
4	Treetop Village

sideboard

1	Armageddon
4	Carpet of Flowers
2	Cursed Totem
3	Ebony Charm
1	Pernicious Deed
1	Spiritmonger
3	Wrath of God

Sligh
- Alex Shvartsman -

4	Ball Lightning
4	Grim Lavamancer
4	Jackal Pup
4	Mogg Fanatic
3	Cursed Scroll
4	Fireblast
3	Firebolt
4	Incinerate
3	Price of Progress
4	Seal of Fire
19	Mountain
4	Wasteland

sideboard

4	Bottle Gnomes
4	Powder Keg
1	Price of Progress
4	Pyroblast
2	Savage Firecat

Reckless Sligh
- Alex Shvartsman -

4	Fireslinger
4	Goblin Cadet
4	Grim Lavamancer
4	Jackal Pup
4	Mogg Fanatic
4	Mogg Flunkie
2	Chimeric Idol
2	Reckless Abandon
4	Reckless Charge
4	Seal of Fire
4	Shock
4	Volcanic Hammer
4	Barbarian Ring
12	Mountain

Although dual lands and Swords to Plowshares are gone, the concept of Oathing up a powerful creature—and gaining threshold while at it—remains. New Oath decks might look similar to the one Bill Macey played. Oath of Druids might continue to appear in blue-green decks that include Morphling, which is sure to remain the most powerful creature in the format, or even appear in a "Turbo-Land" build with Battlefield Scrounger for recursion, which is Zvi Mowshowitz's vision of the card's future. Whatever the case, I am certain that we have not seen the last of this enchantment.

"Monobrown"

Once the sacred cows of Extended, such as Miracle Gro, have been slain, the environment will be open to new decks—or old ones. Players will be sure to search their memories for what worked in Extended, or even the old Standard, over the years in order to see which of these concepts survived and can be adapted to the new format. One such archetype is Monobrown, artifact-based decks that either use blue for Tinker or red for Goblin Welder or Wildfire. Kai Budde won Worlds a few years ago with a Wildfire deck, and another German player, Christian Luhrs, played a Welder variant more recently with some success in the Nice Masters Series Gateway Tournament.

Compared to other archetypes, artifact decks lose surprisingly little with the rotation. Very few cards lost from Luhrs's deck are not easily replaced, and powerful cards such Mishra's Helix can be added. A Tinker version of the deck strikes me as somewhat more powerful than a Welder version; it may even be worth trying to use both with Shivan Reef and City of Brass. For a more in-depth look at a Tinker build, check out Brian Kibler's Extended Tech article on page 48.

Monobrown
- Christian Luhrs -

4	Goblin Welder
4	Masticore
4	Grim Monolith
4	Mindstone
4	Phyrexian Furnace
4	Smokestack
4	Sphere of Resistance
4	Tangle Wire
4	Tsabo's Web
4	Urza's Bauble
4	Ancient Tomb
4	City of Traitors
2	Mountain

sideboard

4	Bottle Gnomes
4	Mogg Salvage
4	Pyroblast
3	Rejuvenation Chamber

KEY CARDS REMOVED FROM THE FORMAT

Counts as both islands and plains and is affected by spells that affect either. Tap to add either blue or green to your mana pool.

Dual lands—Their removal will affect the format more than any other change.

Force of Will
You may pay 1 life and remove a blue card in your hand from the game instead of paying Force of Will's casting cost. Effects that prevent or redirect damage cannot be used to counter this loss of life. Counter target spell.

Every blue deck will feel the pain of this loss.

Remove target creature from the game. Its controller gains life equal to its power.
"Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than war."
—John Milton,
"To the Lord General Cromwell"

Creatures like Spiritmonger become a lot better with the best removal spell gone

The most powerful combo in Extended in recent years is no longer an option

Cumulative Upkeep 2
When Illusions of Grandeur comes into play, gain 20 life. When Illusions of Grandeur leaves play, lose 20 life. Effects that prevent or redirect damage cannot be used to counter this loss of life.

Fireblast
You may sacrifice two mountains instead of paying Fireblast's casting cost.
Fireblast deals 4 damage to target creature or player.
Embermages aren't well known for their diplomatic skills.

Sligh's sharpest tooth has been pulled.

THE NEW STAPLES

This will see even more play than before. Certainly one of Extended's power cards now, it will remain as such

Cursed Scroll
3, : Name a card. Target opponent chooses a card at random from your hand. If he or she chooses the named card, Cursed Scroll deals 2 damage to target creature or player

Flying
, Tap two creatures you control: Return target permanent to owner's hand.
It is said that the wind will blow the world past if you wait long enough.

Creatures like this become far more powerful with no Swords to Plowshares to rain on their parade

Artifact decks may be coming back, so dust off your Grim Monoliths.

At the time you play Tinker, sacrifice an artifact.
Search your library for an artifact card and put that artifact into play. Shuffle your library afterward.
"I wonder how it feels to be bored."
—Jhoira, artificer

Whenever Spiritmonger deals damage to a creature, put a +1/+1 counter on Spiritmonger.
: Regenerate Spiritmonger.
: Spiritmonger becomes the color of your choice until end of turn.

Various creature-based decks should make a comeback

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Since the format changes were announced, I must've been asked what I was going to play in the new Extended over a hundred times. My answer is always the same: it is too soon to tell. Although a number of expansions are being removed, there is also one standalone set that is being added. With plenty of powerful cards, *Onslaught* is certain to influence the new format and I for one am leaving most of the actual deck building until after the release of new set.

Until then, research the successful Standard and Extended decks from the last few years. I am certain that there are archetypes among them that will be resurrected in November.

Extended Tech

by Brian Kibler

The upcoming rotation of Extended in November means that many old favorites have left the format, causing a great deal of commotion and forcing a rethinking of the entire metagame. One of the few decks to emerge unscathed from the changes is Tinker, which lost nothing in the rotation and whose greatest foes, Force of Will and Null Rod, are gone for good. Tinker has been a successful decktype in almost every format in which it has been legal, from the Urza Block Constructed Pro Tour–New York, where five of the Top 8 decks were Tinker, to the 2000 World Championships, where Jon Finkel defeated Bob Maher Jr. in the Tinker mirror match for the title.

Tinker

November 2002

- 4 Masticore
- 4 Metalworker
- 1 Phyrexian Colossus
- 1 Crumbling Sanctuary
- 1 Cursed Scroll
- 4 Grim Monolith
- 1 Mishra's Helix
- 4 Phyrexian Processor
- 1 Smokestack
- 4 Tangle Wire
- 4 Thran Dynamo
- 4 Tinker
- 4 Voltaic Key
- 3 Ancient Tomb
- 4 City of Traitors
- 12 Island
- 4 Rishadan Port

Sideboard

- 3 Annul
- 2 Back to Basics
- 1 Bottle Gnomes
- 2 Crumbling Sanctuary
- 2 Defense Grid
- 1 Mishra's Helix
- 2 Smokestack
- 1 Thran Foundry
- 1 Upheaval

At the time you play Tinker, sacrifice an artifact
Search your library for an artifact card and put that artifact into play
Shuffle your library afterward
"I wonder how it feels to be bored."
—Thrull, artificer

The deck's namesake and cornerstone, Tinker has two main functions: putting powerful artifacts into play for less than their mana cost and searching for the particular artifact that is most useful in any given situation.

Artifact
3, Tap: Name a card. Target opponent chooses a card at random from your hand. If he or she chooses the named card, Cursed Scroll deals 2 damage to target creature or player
Illus. D. Alexander Gregory

Artifact
For each 1 damage that would be dealt to a player, that player removes the top card of his or her library from the game instead
Illus. Randy Gallegos

These are the deck's "silver bullets"—powerful threats that are nearly impossible for particular decks to deal with. Phyrexian Colossus is almost impervious to damage-based removal and is also much more powerful now that Swords to Plowshares is gone from the format. Mishra's Helix and Smokestack provide near-locks against many decks, Cursed Scroll serves as a non-creature win condition while doubling as removal, and Crumbling Sanctuary brings beatdown decks to a grinding halt.

Artifact
X, Tap: Tap X lands
The helix was the finest example of Mishra's campaign strategy. If he couldn't have Argoth, no one could
Illus. Berry

Artifact
During your upkeep, you may put a soot counter on Smokestack
During each player's upkeep, that player sacrifices a permanent for each soot counter on Smokestack
Illus. Scott Kirschner

Artifact Creature
Phyrexian Colossus doesn't untap during your untap step
Pay 8 life: Untap Phyrexian Colossus
Phyrexian Colossus can't be blocked except by three or more creatures
8/8
Illus. Mark Tedin

The engine that makes the deck run, these cards provide fast mana, making it possible to play the deck's powerful artifacts unfairly quickly. Metalworker, while fragile, is particularly explosive, especially in combination with Voltaic Key.

Artifact
Grim Monolith does not untap during your untap phase
Add three colorless mana to your mana pool. Play this ability as a mana source
4: Untap Grim Monolith
Illus. Chippy

Artifact Creature
Reveal any number of artifact cards in your hand. Add that many colorless mana to your mana pool for each card revealed this way
"At this rate I fully expect to be replaced by a clockwork golem by next week."
—Barrin
Illus. Don Hazeltine

Artifact
1, Tap: Untap target artifact
The key did not work on a single lock, yet it opened many doors.
Illus. Henry G. Higginbotham

Artifact
Add three colorless mana to your mana pool
Urza's metathron children were conceived, birthed, and nurtured by an integrated system of machines.
Illus. Ron Spears

The deck's primary win condition, Phyrexian Processor pumps out enormous Minion tokens every turn until your opponent is overwhelmed. Against decks with artifact removal, it's a good idea to hold the Processor back until you have enough mana to produce a creature immediately. Your opponents may be able to kill the Processor, but it's unlikely that they can kill the Processor *and* a 10/10 creature.

The deck's primary anti-creature measure, Masticore can mow down armies at an alarming rate when fueled by Metalworker and Thran Dynamo, and it doubles as a win condition.

Tangle Wire is tremendously effective at tying up your opponents' resources, and after a couple of turns, it becomes the perfect artifact to sacrifice when you Tinker for something more powerful.

Tinker is all about explosive turns, and the place to start is the mana base. City of Traitors and Ancient Tomb allow you to play your artifact mana quickly for a more than reasonable price. Islands provide the mana necessary to play Tinker itself, and Rishadan Port keeps your opponents pinned down while your artifact assault tears them apart.

SIDEBOARD

VARIATIONS

1. If combo decks are popular in your area, Sphere of Resistance can be a powerful addition to the main deck or sideboard.
2. If your area does not have many beatdown decks, consider removing one or two Masticores for Stroke of Genius, an alternate win condition that can also refill your hand.

More silver bullets and additional copies of the ones in the main deck provide greater consistency and Tinkering power after sideboarding. Defense Grid, Mishra's Helix, and Smokestack are good against control, while Bottle Gnomes and Crumbling Sanctuary help shut down beatdown decks. Thran Foundry makes an appearance against graveyard strategies due to the loss of Phyrexian Furnace.

Once one of the most feared cards in all of Extended, Back to Basics is much less powerful with the departure of the dual lands, but it's still worth sideboarding against decks with lots of nonbasic land.

A catch-all solution for slower decks with problem permanents, Upheaval can be devastating with the amount of mana the Tinker deck is capable of producing. Floating ten mana and replaying an entire battery of artifacts is not an uncommon play.

Other artifact decks are likely to be popular, and Annul is your best weapon against them. It's also a reasonable answer to Seal of Cleansing and Pernicious Deed, the deck's largest problems now that Force of Will is gone.

Team Profile
2002 U.S. National Team

by Gary Wise

It takes a lot to be a member of the U.S. national team. On the surface, it might seem like all it takes is one good weekend in Orlando, a weekend where the cards draw well and the opponents play poorly, but really, that's only the tip of the iceberg. Making the team is only the start of an odyssey towards the World Championships that is packed with more pressure and expectation than most players will see in their careers.

When this year's U.S. National Championships started, there was a lot of speculation about which players would emerge to carry the Stars and Stripes to Sydney. Jon Finkel, Ben Rubin, Billy Jensen, Eric Froehlich, Mike Turian . . . these are the names—and the superstars behind the names—that have "(USA)" on their feature match signs at each Pro Tour. With such high-powered players coming out in droves for this tournament, the expectation was that the United States would end Nationals weekend with the team to beat. That's how it's been every year.

The past provides evidence of this. The list of names that have represented the U.S. is unbelievable: Mike Long, Jon Finkel, Chris Benafel, Kyle Rose, Mark Justice, Matt Place, Dennis Bentley, Matt Linde, Zvi Mowshowitz, Bob Maher, Justin Gary, Trevor Blackwell, Brian Hegstad . . . it reads like a roll call for Pro Tour success. That's a lot to live up to.

When the dust settled in Orlando this time around, the team that was left standing seemed to provide more questions than answers. A year ago, an unknown Eugene Harvey emerged from the meatgrinders to qualify for Nationals and carried that momentum all the way to a third place finish, just behind Pro Tour winner Trevor Blackwell and a then-unknown Brian Hegstad. Questions were asked and insecurities voiced about the questionable components of that team, but after a shaky start at Worlds, they rebounded to take home the title and quiet their detractors. Harvey and Hegstad emerged from the shadows as stars of the game. Now Eugene Harvey faces those same questions, only he's taken the place of Blackwell.

Eugene Harvey is the U.S. National Champion. Hailing from New Jersey but spending most of his time in Pennsylvania attending Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), he is essentially the bridge that has united Teams CMU and TOGIT. Mike Turian, meet Gerrard Fabiano. Andrew Cuneo, meet Osyp Lebedowicz. That connection has forged one of the best playtesting groups on the Pro Tour. If you get beaten by any one of these guys, you know who to blame: Eugene Harvey.

Living with Turian, Andrew Johnson, and Dan Silberman gives Harvey all the **Magic** he can handle. With ***Magic*** *Online* and real card-clutching gamers around at all times, the piano enthusiast is rarely lacking for a game. This constant exposure to **Magic** has made its mark on Eugene's results. After finishing third at the 2001 National Championships, he went to Worlds, where his 13th place finish virtually carried the U.S. national team to its win in the team competition. While his 37th place finish with Team East Coast Creechers, which he formed with Roger Sorino and Lawrence Creech, had to be disappointing for any resident of CMU's Team Limited factory, his 16th place finish at Pro Tour–New Orleans showed the world that his summer success was no fluke.

Harvey furthered that notion when he won Grand Prix–Atlanta, which may have been the toughest Grand Prix of the year, drafting *Odyssey* block. He cruised through the first eleven rounds, needing only one draw in the final draft of the Swiss to make the Top 8. He then went on to destroy the rest of the Top 8 with a draft in which he got an amazing six Mystic Zealots. His deck was so strong that he was forced to leave one of the Zealots, considered by most to be the best white common in *Odyssey,* in the sideboard.

After a disappointing Pro Tour–San Diego, Eugene finished in the money at Pro Tour–Osaka. A 58th place finish in Nice capped a great pre-Worlds season for him, but that was all icing on the cake that was to be his Nationals win. At Nationals, he played Mike Turian's "Squirrel-Opposition" deck, going 5-1 on the first day and beating Chris Benafel, among others, before losing to Peter Jesuale in the fifth round. On Day 2, Harvey's draft skills came out in force, giving him wins in his first four rounds before he drew his way into the Top 8.

Once there, Harvey couldn't have asked for a more favorable set of matchups, as he faced three Psychatog decks in a row. He defeated playtest partner Matt Rubin in the quarterfinals and Andrew Ranks, who would eventually join him on the national team, in the semis before taking down Eric Franz to take the title. In winning the tournament, Harvey transformed himself into a superstar and one of the best U.S. Nationals competitors ever, joining Jon Finkel and Mike Long on the very short list of two-time U.S. national team members. The thing is, though, that it isn't Eugene who inspires the questions about this team.

Andrew Ranks, while not as familiar to Pro Tour followers as his brother Matt, isn't exactly new to the game. He's been playing **Magic** for more than five years, mostly out of Hammer's Comics near his New Hampshire home. Ranks hasn't made his dent on the Pro Tour scene, but according to those who know him, it's not for lack of skill:

"He's really good", "he's good", "he's really strong", and "he's even better in Limited" were the kind of comments that were being thrown around by New Englanders all over the tournament venue as they were asked, "Who is Andrew Ranks?" While he may consider Limited to be his strong suit, his powerhouse showing on Day 1 suggests that there's more to this guy than opening good boosters.

Ranks came to the table six times on Day 1 with his trusty Psychatog deck in hand, and six times he left with the victory in tow, taking down Darwin Kastle en route. Day 2 was no different,

2002 U.S. national team: Andrew Ranks, Eugene Harvey, and Eric Franz.

with Andrew winning his first draft and the first match of the second before drawing with Harvey in the eleventh round (after double mulliganing in game three) to spoil his flawless tournament. Already qualified for the Top 8, he finally lost to Eric Franz 2-1 in the twelfth round, which sent Franz to the Top 8 as well.

In the single-elimination rounds, Ranks was forced to work for his continued success. His quarterfinal match against Blake Quelle went the full five games before he defeated the New Yorker and his red-blue-green madness deck. Then, it was time to take on Harvey. Again, the match went to a full five games, but this time Ranks couldn't win the decider, relegating him to also-ran status. No longer in contention for the title, Andrew had to concern himself with making the national team. Standing in his way was Alex Borteh, runner-up at last year's World Championships, but the mirror match proved little problem, and Ranks emerged victorious, three games to none.

While the mild-mannered Ranks went about the business of winning ten straight, the more intense Eric Franz was proving equally dominant. A year earlier, Franz played in the Junior Super Series (JSS) in the same complex after winning a number of JSS Challenges, but that was nothing compared to the success he would find this year. One by one, Pro Tour regulars lined up to take him and his Psychatog deck on. First, it was Ed Fear in the mirror match. Then it was Noah Weil, then Zvi Mowshowitz, then Blake Quelle . . . one by one they stepped to the plate, only to go down swinging. Franz ended the day at 6-0, losing only two games.

Day 2 didn't start quite as well for the seventeen year old Portland native. Franz lost his first two matches before defeating Bill Stead to avoid being swept out of the first draft. The second draft was kinder to Franz, who defeated Jerry Ellenberg and Peter Jesuale in the tenth and eleventh rounds before defeating Andrew Ranks in his twelfth match of the tournament to win the draft and a spot in the Top 8.

Once there, Franz kept the win streak going. He continued to dominate, beating Peter Jesuale 3-0 after having defeated him in the Limited portion of the Swiss. In the semis, Franz faced off against Alex Borteh in a Psychatog mirror match, which he won easily in four games. Finally, though, his streak was ended at six matches in a 3-0 sweep by "Eubroken" Harvey.

What Franz lacks in Pro Tour experience, he makes up for in pro-level support. With the former Team ABU's American contingent based partially in Portland, Eric has had the benefit of playing against and with Chris Benafel and the like. This experience will prove crucial come Worlds.

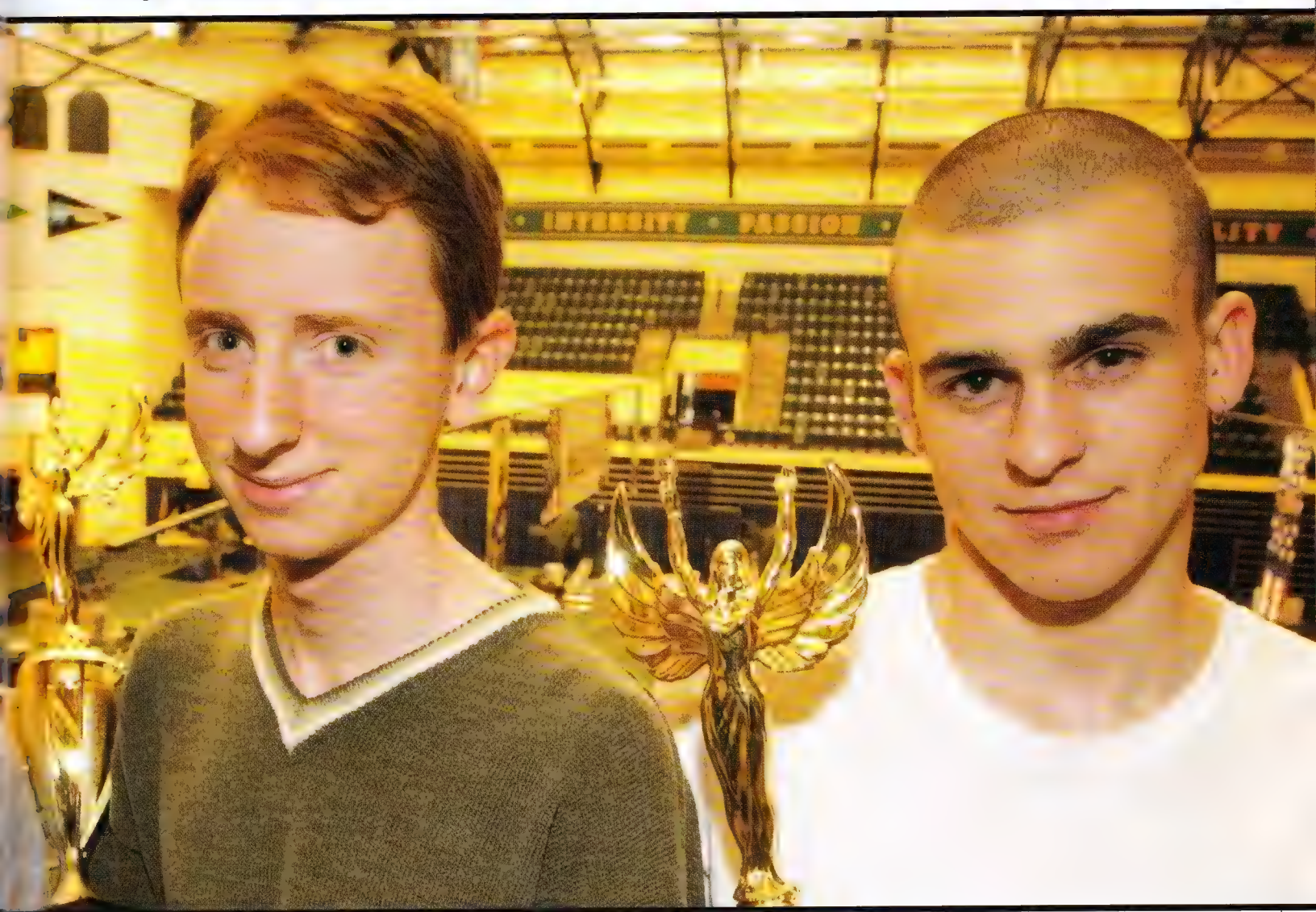
Now, these three advance to the World Championships carrying not just their nation on their backs, but the expectations of history as well. Each year, the U.S. national team has headed to Worlds with the expectation of victory, and, with the exception of 1997, they've succeeded every time. This year, though, the original **Magic** nation may face its toughest climb.

With Kai Budde leading the Germans, Tomi Walamies leading the Finns, and the Dutch offering what may be the most power-packed national team any country has produced in years, questions and doubts surround the three Americans as they take on the world. A year ago, the same questions were asked, and they seemed founded when the U.S. finished Day 1 in 43rd place, but all doubt was erased four days later by the victory. Now, Harvey and his lieutenants have to do it all over again.

As for what these three have to say to the doubters, Franz summed the attitude up best in his tournament report:

"Slops: All the thousands of chumps out there who are so quick to dismiss this year's U.S. team of having a chance at Worlds."

It is that fire, balanced by the level-headedness of his two quieter teammates, that will likely lead to any success this team has in Australia. Will Franz be right, or will America's detractors and potential usurpers finally have their day in the sun? The world is watching.



Team Profile
Punisher

by Gary Wise

Pro Tour teams form for one primary reason: mutual self-benefit. The results over the years have made it clear that one needs to be surrounded by a solid team in order to succeed in the Pro Tour jungle for prolonged periods of time. With many knowing this, that end is sought out in a number of different ways. Teams begin as everything from collections of professional strangers with a job to do, to friends who want to be seen by the world as friends. Overall, it's that second category that Team Punisher falls into.

Who is Team Punisher? Team Punisher is the team whose members had never chalked up a Pro Tour Top 8 before its formation, prior to 2001 Pro Tour–New York, but have managed five since. Team Punisher is probably the best team you never heard of. Team Punisher is named after Tomi Walamies's misreading of Dromar, the Banisher. Team Punisher is eight guys who manage to make a workable situation out of sharing one very colorful hat. Team Punisher is the team that turned down Kai Budde because their familiarity with each other could not be trifled with. That's Team Punisher. They're that good, and they're that dedicated to one another.

Pro Tour–New Orleans Finalist Tomi Walamies

Tomi Walamies has been around since the beginning of **Magic**, and twice, he's finished in the Top 10 of a Pro Tour event only to miss the Top 8. Since Punisher's formation at 2000 Pro Tour–Chicago, Tomi has won two national titles. He finished second at Pro Tour–New Orleans. He's made Top 4 at a European Championship, he's won more than he's lost in the Masters Series, and he even handed Jon Finkel his final Masters defeat. He's a builder of decks and a player of Islands for whom an entire Extended archetype was named. He's the lone Finn of the team, hailing from Kaunianen, close to Sweden. He's 22, he's studying Political Science, and he's as much a fixture on the Pro Tour as any Scandinavian this side of Sigurd Eskeland. Thomas Rosholm is an up-and-coming player whose provocative dress inspires thought and whose time to shine is soon to come. Time and again, this native of Malmo in the south of Sweden has gone to Pro Tours and finished in the money, only to miss out on the Top 8. He's a noted Internet personality who has two Top 32 finishes this year to go with two Swedish national team banners. He's the player who Jens Thorén predicts will make his first Top 8 in the coming year, but only because it should have happened in the last year. He's one of the founding fathers.

Johan Sadeghpour's most notable result is his win in the Masters Gateway tournament in New Orleans. He's the one Punisher from Umea (in the north of Sweden) that you don't know, but only because he hasn't notched the two Top 8's that each of the others has. He's the one who lost to Kyle Rose's Armadillo Cloaked Llanowar Knight to finish tenth and miss the Top 8 of 2000 Pro Tour–Los Angeles. He's the darkest and most flamboyant member of the team and the center of all conversation when they play until five in the morning on Pro Tour Monday. He's the resident Limited specialist, he's 22 years old, he's described by his friends as evil, and he works for the government. Call him big brother.

Mattias Jorstedt is a native of Gotteberg, Sweden, and a deckbuilding mastermind who people mistake for Mattias Kettil. He's the hard luck prince, constantly looking for the crown he knows should be on his head, missing Top 8 after Top 8, always by inches. He's a multiple Grand Prix Top 8 finisher, with one of the most creative deck-design minds in the game, and he's as helpful as anyone when it comes to taking Walamies's stranger ideas and turning them into reality. He's 25, he's pursuing a Masters degree in Computer Science, and he played Tireless Tribe in a Constructed Pro Tour.

Mattias Kettil is a Gotteberg native and a Rebel-running maniac who made Top 4 at 2000 Pro Tour–New York. He's the one that people mistake for Mattias Jorstedt. He's had that one great moment, but it came prematurely, and now he's looking to surpass that past success. He's Jorstedt's constant playtest partner, and if it rolls, taps, shoots, swings, or does anything else in the field of games, he'll use it. He's 24, he's working on a Masters Thesis in Computer Science, and he also played Tireless Tribe in a Constructed Pro Tour.

Anton Jonsson is a 24 year old who, before Punisher, couldn't find success on the Pro Tour. He joined the team for Pro Tour–New Orleans and made the Top 8 in his first shot with "Three-Deuce". He's the second of the Umea players, and he's been on IRC so long he can remember Weissman and Maysonet talking Type 1 tech. He's the one who notched his second Top 8 in Nice, who won his first National Championship this year, who made Top 8 at Euros, and who was so broke a year ago that he spent his last penny to get to Grand Prix–Oslo, where he qualified for New Orleans. He hasn't had to work a day since.

Dave Montreuil is the final piece of the puzzle. He's the Canadian-turned-Swiss jazz-tooting wunderkind who came out of nowhere to finish second at last year's European Championship. When the team needed a beatdown player, he was recruited, and before long, the Scandinavians found out that he was more than just a beatdown player.

Jens Thorén is the most feared Punisher of all. He's the one who earned the nickname "Broken" with three wins in four tournaments at Gottcon two years ago. He's the one who made the finals of Pro Tour–San Diego and followed that up with a Top 4 finish in Osaka. He's the member of the team who always wins in playtesting because it comes

Two-time Pro Tour Finalist Jens Thorén

naturally to him and he's just that good. He's a professional Quake player, he's a professional **Magic** player, and he's considered by most to be among the top five players on the planet right now.

Those are the parts, but not the whole. One recurring pattern with this group is the way their careers changed for the better once they united. The thing that makes their various parts into the sum of their whole is the friendship that ties them together. Time and again, when the other gamers have gone to bed, Punisher will be found drafting on the sidelines, drinking a beer, living it up, and laughing it up because they see the joke: it's that they keep playing to quench their thirst for **Magic**, knowing full well that it's too powerful.

The individuals that are Team Punisher have been around **Magic** forever. Walamies started playing in 1994, as did the Umea guys, and even back then, he and fellow Internet pioneer Jonsson talked deck tech. Sadeghpour and Thorén went to school together and met Jonsson at local tournaments, while the Mattiases, according to some, were born joined at the hip. Thing is, Walamies was working with the other Finns and Gotteberg and Malmo are more than 1000 kilometers away from Umea. How, then, did this tightest of groups get tight?

The team first started working together when Niels Sanders Jensen organized Team Scandinavia, an amalgamation of Swedes, Finns, Norwegians, and a Dane. Walamies, Thorén, and Rosholm were brought in by Andreas Jonsson after Euros 2000. Walamies brought other Finns with him, but within a few months he became frustrated with the attitude taken by some of his countrymen that the best finish is one with a high yield that requires little work. Walamies, Andreas Jonsson, Daniel Mukka, Thorén, and Rosholm then split off to form an early version of Punisher.

The results started coming immediately. With Sadeghpour added to the fold on Thorén's recommendation, it was Walamies who first broke out under the Punisher banner, winning Finnish Nationals for the first time. Then came the 2001 European Championship, where both Walamies and Thorén made it to the Top 8, the latter finishing first in the Swiss. World Championships in Toronto was a disappointment individually, but Walamies and the Finnish team finished third in the team competition, while Rosholm and his countrymen finished fourth. Before the team really started clicking, though, two things happened. First, Andreas Jonsson stepped away from the competitive game, as did Johan Franzen, a member of Team Scandinavia who would still be with the team today were he playing. Second, Mukka opted out of Pro Tour–New York one day before he, Andreas Jonsson, and Rosholm were supposed to leave for the tournament. The team, highly displeased, opted to remove him from their mailing list.

As the team prepared for Pro Tour–New Orleans, Rosholm realized that with the dismantling of Team Reject, the Mattiases were without affiliation, and an agreement was quickly reached. Around this time, Anton Jonsson was qualifying at Grand Prix–Oslo and was duly added to the team. Lightning struck.

Walamies designed his New Orleans deck five days before the tournament, and the rest of the team didn't have time to test it thoroughly. Walamies took second place with it, though, and Jonsson joined him in the Top 8. Meanwhile, Sadeghpour was winning the Masters Gateway. Then the team made its way to San Diego, where it was Thorén's turn to make the finals. Then it was Osaka, and Jens was once again dominant before bowing out in the semifinals, one better than Jonsson's performance in Nice, where Brian Davis ended his run in the quarterfinals.

When the World Championship season hit, things only got better. Walamies won his second straight National Championship, and Jonsson won his first. Jonsson went on to make Top 8 at Euros . . . and the list just keeps on growing.

And that's Team Punisher: success through friendship. They work together, they play together, and they win together. These days, mercenary **Magic** often comes to the forefront, and from the north of Europe, these guys bring a breath of fresh air. That's who Team Punisher is: they're pros, they're winners, they're friends, and they're the best new team to hit the Pro Tour in years.

Anton Jonsson: Top 8 Finisher in New Orleans, San Diego, and 2002 European Championships

Snap Judgment

History Behind a Few Judgment Cards

by Mark Rosewater

In the last issue, I took an in-depth look at how a few Judgment *cards were created. In this issue, I thought I'd take a peek at some of the cards that have shorter stories about their designs.*

Put two 1 1 white Bird creature tokens with flying into play.
Flashback—Tap three untapped white creatures you control. (You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)

Battle Screech

As a general rule, Research & Development (R&D) makes token creatures without any special abilities, or, as we would say, "vanilla". One of the few special abilities that's an exception is flying. The problem was that all of the flashback spells that made creature tokens in *Odyssey* block were green, and green really isn't about flying. During *Judgment,* it dawned on me that it might be cool to bleed the flashback token-creators into one of green's allied colors, creating a spell with flashback that made flying creature tokens. Since red's weenies are as bad at flying as green's are and because *Judgment* was the "green-white set", the spell was put into white.

Benevolent Bodyguard

This guy actually appeared way back in design for the *Tempest* expansion. At the time, there was a cycle of five common creatures (called the martyrs) that were all 1/1 for one mana. Each of them could be sacrificed for some small effect that was in flavor for its color. (The black and red ones were the only ones to see print as Blood Pet and Mogg Fanatic, respectively.) Influenced by this idea, the *Judgment* development team included a new set of martyrs in *Judgment*—Benevolent Bodyguard, Hapless Researcher, Cabal Trainee, Liberated Dwarf, and Krosan Wayfarer.

Sacrifice Benevolent Bodyguard: Target creature you control gains protection from the color of your choice until end of turn.
"My destiny is to save others so their destinies may be achieved."
1/1

Cabal Therapy
Sorcery
Name a nonland card. Target player reveals his or her hand and discards from it all cards with that name.
Flashback—Sacrifice a creature. (You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)

Cabal Therapy

This card was inspired by the *Legends* card Nebuchadnezzar. It was called "Go Fish" in design. ("Do you have any Counterspells?" "Go fish.") Originally, the card had a mana flashback cost, but it was changed in development because the team was trying to create more flashback cards with non-mana flashback costs.

Cephalid Inkshrouder

This card was inspired by the card Invisibility from Alpha. One of the things that always annoyed me about Invisibility was that it made my creature unblockable (except by Walls), but it didn't protect my creature from targeted spells. I mean, how can you bolt my invisible creature? The Inkshrouder was my first attempt to use this new interpretation of invisibility.

Exoskeletal Armor

This card was designed by Richard Garfield and was called Lhurgoyf Armor throughout design. Richard dared us to turn it over to the development team at a cost of 🌳, which we did. After playtesting, development added a mana.

Exoskeletal Armor
Enchant Creature
Enchanted creature gets +X/+X, where X is the number of creature cards in all graveyards.
"We use only what we need—but in times of strife, our need becomes great."
Centaur warrior

Hunting Grounds
Enchantment
Threshold—Whenever an opponent plays a spell, you may put a creature card from your hand into play. (You have threshold as long as seven or more cards are in your graveyard.)
In the heavy hush of Krosa, drawing on mana is like ringing a dinner bell.

Hunting Grounds

In design, this card had a pre-threshold ability that allowed you to return a creature card from your graveyard to your hand whenever one of your opponents played a spell. The development team thought it would be cooler to make a spell that was a lot cheaper and just had a threshold ability.

Quiet Speculation

This card was inspired by Buried Alive, a spell from *Weatherlight* that was reprinted in *Odyssey.* This was supposed to be the "spell" version of that type of card. In design, the card was a 2🌳 sorcery that read "Search target player's library for three instant or sorcery cards and put them in that player's graveyard. That player shuffles his or her library." The development team narrowed the card's function and lowered its mana cost. My sources tell me the final version might see some tournament play.

Search target player's library for up to three cards with flashback and put them into that player's graveyard. Then the player shuffles his or her library.
"The best foresight is hindsight."
Empress Llawan

Whenever a Bird is put into your graveyard from play, put a feather counter on Soulcatchers' Aerie.
All Birds get +1 +1 for each feather counter on Soulcatchers' Aerie.

Soulcatcher's Aerie

When we consolidated all the birds into creature type Bird several years back, I got a lot of angry mail from people who were upset that Soraya the Falconer no longer worked. "Don't worry," I promised them, "we'll print a Bird Lord soon." And we did. Unfortunately, in the development of *Invasion,* Kangee, Aerie Keeper came out more than a little weak. During the design of the *Odyssey* block, I vowed to make a good card for players to build their Bird decks around. With all the Aven around, it seemed like the perfect opportunity. (I also added Battle Screech to the set to boost the Bird decks a little.) Originally, Soulcatcher's Aerie had you sacrifice a Bird to put a feather counter on the card, but many members of R&D thought it was odd to have a white enchantment that made you sacrifice creatures. They thought it felt too black, so the card was changed so that it would grow when Birds died rather than forcing you to sacrifice them.

I hope this gives you some insight into the smaller issues that come up during the creation of a set.

Magic Goes Online

Extended Rotates

by Alex Shvartsman

After a year in beta testing, ***Magic*** *Online* has finally been released, offering new challenges not only to players but also to collectors. While some players may have been annoyed to start at zero, others have been delighted with the challenge of building their new collections in an arena where the acquisition of every good card is an event—something many of us have not experienced since first starting out in **Magic**.

The big question, of course, was what kind of secondary market would grow out of the program. The basis for it is the fact that each pack is worth $3.29—no more, no less. While it is possible to pick up physical boxes below MSRP at various discount levels, every online pack costs the same amount. This is sure to push up the value of online singles.

In Japan, where the retail value of a booster pack is well over $3.50, single cards are worth significantly more than in United States. This correlation persists around the world—cheaper packs mean cheaper singles. Another factor in current online singles pricing is that there is a very limited supply of cards in existence so far. The two factors combine, causing prices to remain quite high. Wrath of God and Upheaval go for 10 tickets each (a ticket is a virtual dollar, needed to enter tournaments on ***Magic*** *Online* and moonlighting as its unofficial currency among traders and dealers), while the asking price on Birds of Paradise is a whopping 25 tickets. With so many people starting out from scratch, even commons are trading well. It is pretty easy to get a ticket for four Llanowar Elves or 20–30 random commons.

Crafty traders are able to speculate in packs as well. It is possible to buy packs as low as 2.5 tickets each from players who have won lots of them in a tournament, and it is possible to sell them as high as four tickets. While four tickets are worth more than you would pay for that same pack in cash, a lot of people are reluctant to pay out-of-pocket, preferring to use tickets they got for selling off some of their singles or other packs.

Magic *Online* has exceeded expectations so far in most areas, including just how active the secondary market has become. Websites dealing exclusively in online singles are springing up, and established dealers are beginning to carry this product. The future of the program is looking bright indeed.

As far as printed cards are concerned, the huge news is the announced changes to the Extended format, which you can read about elsewhere in this issue. Dual lands dipped in value but will likely make a comeback once players realize that they still want them for casual games, 5-color, and Type 1. While cards removed from Extended dropped in value, good cards that will remain in the format (mostly from Urza block) are doing quite well. Everyone who didn't already have Morphlings and Cursed Scrolls is picking them up. In the next issue, we will take a closer look at how those values stabilized.

— Alex's Power 9 —

The Cards That Are Currently in the Highest Demand

1

The king of all mana creatures remains comfortably at the top.

2

Call of the Herd
Put a 3/3 green Elephant creature token into play.
Flashback 3 (You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)

Call has long since overtaken "Finkel" as the #1 card in *Odyssey*

3

: Untap Morphling
: Morphling gains flying until end of turn
: Morphling cannot be the target of spells or abilities until end of turn
1: Morphling gets +1 -1 until end of turn
1: Morphling gets -1 +1 until end of turn

The Extended changes did nothing to hurt the best creature ever.

4

Nantuko Shade
Creature — Insect Shade
: Nantuko Shade gets +1/+1 until end of turn.
"If the Nantuko only knew what awaits them beyond death, they would abandon all they hold dear."
—Cabal Patriarch

The Shade is ultra-hot in anticipation of *Odyssey* Block Constructed

5

Upheaval is doing great, for the same reason as the Shade.

6

The "Counter-Trenches" archetype keeps this old favorite hot.

7

Reveal the top five cards of your library. An opponent separates those cards into two face-up piles. Put one pile into your hand and the other into your graveyard.

With few *Invasion* packs being opened now, this card is highly prized.

8

Shadowmage Infiltrator can't be blocked except by artifact creatures and or black creatures.
Whenever Shadowmage Infiltrator deals combat damage to a player, you may draw a card.

"Finkel" continues its downward spiral until there is a good deck for it.

9

Kicker (You may pay an additional as you play this spell.)
Urza's Rage can't be countered by spells or abilities.
Urza's Rage deals 3 damage to target creature or player. If you paid the kicker cost, instead Urza's Rage deals 10 damage to that creature or player and the damage can't be prevented.

Once a $20 rare, you can get these for as low as $10 now.

DCI Global Rankings

This section highlights the Top 10 ranked players from each country. It uses DCI Composite ratings, which are the averages of the players' Limited and Constructed ratings. Only countries that have at least ten players with Composite ratings are included. The number of sanctioned matches that each person has played is also included. DCI ratings are updated every week on Tuesday night, Pacific time. Wednesday is the best time to view updated ratings.

These ratings are from Wednesday, July 3, 2002. For the most updated ratings and rankings, visit www.thedci.com.

Argentina

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Diego Ostrovich	Buenos Aires		
2	Gabriel Caligaris	Buenos Aires	1963	433
3	Matias Gabrenya			
4	Jose Barbero	Campana	1942	527
5	Gerardo Saiz			
6	Ernesto Mingorance	Buenos Aires	1917	566
7	Ariel Russo	Buenos Aires		
7	Matias Bollati	Cordoba	1894	330
9	Lucas Ramirez			
10	Gabriel Michelena	Jose C. Paz	1889	369

Australia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1			1956	
2	Michael Doecke	Adelaide	1940	431
3	Rob Nadebaum		1927	
4	Andrew Gordon	Ivanhoe	1909	471
4	Andrew Grain	Melbourne	1909	443
6	Nathan Russell	Croydon	1908	510
7	Andrew Lai		1907	361
8	Joe Connolly	North Melbourne	1901	316
9	Daniel Romans		1889	207
10	Merlyn Evans	Braddon	1883	357

Austria

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1				
2	Benedikt Klauser	Vienna	1948	926
3	Helmut Summersberger			
4	Thomas Preyer	Vienna	1912	798
5	Florian Oberauer			
6	Philip Reich	Vienna	1908	449
7				
8	Kung-Chieh Wang	Bad Gastein	1905	607
9	Erwin Ceti	Vienna		
10	Mark Loh	Salzburg	1884	575

Belgium

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Gert Coeckelbergh			
2	Peter Gysemans	Leuven	1947	669
3	Jan Dewit	Herent		
4	Geoffrey Siron	Brussels	1914	438
5	Luis Van Riet			
6	Mathijs Luts	Hasselt	1871	117
7	Bernardo Da Costa Cabral	Brussel		
8	Dominique Coene	Heverlee	1864	421
9	Kurt Verbinnen			
10	Tom De Roo	Merksem	1861	304

Brazil

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Leopoldo Martins Neto		1963	391
2	Carlos Romão	São Paulo	1956	875
3	Guilherme Svaldi		1941	427
4	Victor Galimberti	São Paulo	1936	413
5			1912	382
6	Daniel Brasil Do Carmo	Rio de Janeiro	1909	274
7	Paulo Rosa		1905	416
8	Thomas Felsberg	São Paulo	1902	745
9	Rafael Alvarenga		1899	601
9	Matheus Quinta	Goiânia	1899	204

Canada

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Jeff Cunningham		2063	680
2	Louis Boileau	Brossard	2042	539
3	Terry Lau		2006	1153
4	Jürgen Hahn	Toronto	1990	895
5	Terry Tsang		1989	1024
6	David Rood	Montreal	1986	893
7	Jeff Fung		1978	1149
8	Gabriel Tsang	Toronto	1954	1235
9	Guillaume Daoust	Montreal	1944	750
10	Steven Wolfman	Toronto	1932	1473

Chile

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Rafael Le Saux			
2	Juan Reutter	Santiago	1951	277
3	Waldemar Campos			
4	Rodrigo Sánchez Albert	Santiago	1934	289
5	Jose Capdevila			
6	Francisco Cereceda	Santiago	1901	357
7	Andres Hojman			
7	José Luis Echevarria Paredes	Santiago	1892	243
9	Walter Witt	Santiago		
10	Patricio Quiroz	Santiago	1861	523

China

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Ning Zhang			
2	Xiao Wang	Shanghai	1828	168
3	Dong Zhong	Shenyang		
4	Zhengyan Yang	Zhengzhou	1813	166
5	Shu Nu Zhang			
6	Zhang Yu	Beijing	1782	116
7	Hua Chao Song	Beijing		
8	Zhi Giang Cai	Shanghai	1764	142
9	Xuan-Ji Wang	Beijing		
10	Guobao Xu	Guangzhou	1759	112

Croatia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Ivan Rabel			654
2	Sasha Zorc	Zagreb	1957	507
3	Denis Zagmester			262
4	Danijel Pajur	Zagreb	1870	215
5	Ladislav Zupancic			480
6	Blagoj Jakimov	Porec	1848	381
7	Filip Cec			419
8	Ivan Solaja	Zagreb	1832	359
9	Luka Gasparac			476
10	Goran Peuc	Zagreb	1807	245

Czech Republic

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Jaroslav Sita			
2	Jan Mechura	Plzen	1914	901
3	Jan Brodzák			
4	Vladimir Komanicky	Prague	1899	1000
5	Arnost Zidek		1898	1029
6	Mirko Nyvlt	Doudleby Nad Orlici	1888	484
7	Ales Borek	Brno	1886	701
8	David Korejtko	Zdar Nad Sazavou	1880	269
9	Petr Ustohal	Kurim		
10	Michal Marcik	Brno	1864	1012

Denmark

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1		Copenhagen		
2	Peter Myrvig	Kolding	1968	679
3	Allan Christensen	Aalborg		
4	Jeppe Balsby	Brabrand	1909	771
5	Jonas Cleeman	Copenhagen		
6	Lars Dam	Gentofte	1900	644
7	Rune Espenhain	Ballerup		
8	Frederik Farrington	Vaslone	1886	894
9	Jakob Steinaa	Copenhagen		
9	David Jensen	Aalborg	1885	237

Dominican Republic

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Julio Cabrera	Santo Domingo		
2	Ricardo Del Castillo	Santo Domingo	1842	409
3	Orestes Castillo	Santo Domingo	1835	221
4	Daniel Cabrera	Santo Domingo	1803	448
5	Eric Perdomo	Santo Domingo	1797	302
6	Bryan Flash Dominguez	Santo Domingo	1791	270
8	Hugo Cruz	Santo Domingo	1791	321
8	Luis Lithgow	Santo Domingo	1756	376
8		Santo Domingo	1756	293
10	Jonathan David	Santo Domingo	1755	309

England

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Ben Ronaldson	Surrey	1982	695
3	Gary Wise	[illegible]	1976	1074
4	John Ormerod	Redhill	1974	1198
5	Oliver Schneider	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Andrew Mitchell	London	1956	689
7	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Martin Garcia	London	1942	520
9	[illegible]	Isle Of Wight	1935	749
10	Quentin Martin	Exeter	1929	660

Estonia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Martti Lauri	Tallinn	1720	218
3	Veljo Hagu	Tartu	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Tanel Lumiste	Tartu	1758	340
5	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Neeme Loorits	Tallinn	1717	270
7	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Lauri Lemming	Tartu	1703	184
9	Kaivo Niinlaup	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Kristjan Stolin	Tallinn	1695	98

Finland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	2050	[illegible]
2	Tommi Hovi	Helsinki	2004	743
3	Mikko Punakallio	Espoo	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Arto Hiltunen	Helsinki	1956	667
5	[illegible]	Helsinki	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Arthur Björk	Kuopio	1927	365
7	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Tuomas Kouraata	Helsinki	1920	455
9	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Jussi Salovaara	Helsinki	1887	462

France

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Christophe Haim	Paris	2054	728
3	[illegible]	Auberviliers	2044	1515
4	Gabriel Nassif	Paris	2034	1789
5	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Raphael Levy	Toulouse	2019	938
7	Nicolas Olivieri	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Amiel Tenenbaum	Bagnolet	1996	1163
9	Wilfried Ranque	Varennes	1981	[illegible]
10	Sylvain Lauriol	Bagnols Sur Ceze	1978	939

Germany

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	David Brucker	München	2053	686
3	Dirk Baberowski	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Patrick Mello	Hamburg	2027	1321
5	Daniel Zink	[illegible]	2009	505
6	Christoph Lippert	München	2003	701
7	Christian Lüers	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Roland Bode	Bielefeld	1981	288
9	Mario Zeidler	Dresden	1967	452
10	Rene Kraft	Mainz	1964	1201

Greece

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Dimitris Kopsidas	Crete	1922	270
2	Dimitris Aperghis	Athens	1876	581
3	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Panaiotis Zacharias	Athens	1856	338
5	Kostas Kazas	Athens	1851	437
6	Georgios Kapalas	Kipseli	1843	574
7	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Vangelis Pelekanos	Nea Kiffisia	1836	253
9	Simon Bertiou	Athens	1835	289
10	Emmanouil Nanos	Pefki	1831	126

Hong Kong

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Wing Lok Tam	Hong Kong	1973	600
3	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Chun Hung Wong	Hong Kong	1892	541
5	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Kai Cheong Tang	Hong Kong	1880	518
7	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Kai Yip Lee	Kowloon	1847	176
9	[illegible]	Hong Kong	1845	[illegible]
10	Ng Teddy	Hong Kong	1843	968

Hungary

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Andras Balogh	Szekesfehervar	1900	261
3	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Michael Durkovi	Budapest	1845	669
5	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Tihor Miklós	Budapest	1811	237
7	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Daniel Gulyas	Budapest	1793	536
9	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9	La'Za'R Szabo	Budapest	1789	561

Iceland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Arelius Arelusarson	Reykjavik	1841	335
2	Yngvi Sighvatsson	Reykjavik	1810	315
3	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Marteinn Fridriksson	Reykjavik	1722	225
5	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Johann Moller	Reykjavik	1706	147
7	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Ragnar Mar Kjartansson	Reykjavik	1678	241
9	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Robert Ulfarsson	Reykjavik	1670	123

Indonesia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Andy Budiharto	Surabaya	1802	307
3	Welly Hadiwidjaja	Jakarta	1799	161
4	Rudy Widjaja	Jakarta Utara	1780	245
5	Oliver Suryatenggara	Tangerang	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Kawi Santosa	Jakarta Utara	1760	219
7	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Jonsen Sulaeman	Jakarta Barat	1757	94
9	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Michael Andreas	Jakarta Pusat	1742	144

Ireland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Stewart Shinkins	Limerick	1887	674
3	John Larkin	Dublin	1866	563
4	Oliver Hyde	Cork	1856	251
5	Diarmuid Quirke	Cork	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Robert Mckeon	Dublin	1845	397
7	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Eoin Brosnan	Swords	1809	596
9	[illegible]	Limerick	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Alan Meaney	Waterford	1784	239

Israel

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Danny Yosef	Kiriat Motzkin	1824	101
3	Daniel Bird	Haifa	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Orr Bildner	Tel-Aviv	1804	333
5	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Ayal Hassidim	Jerusalem	1783	145
7	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Alex Shternshain	Haifa	1748	70
9	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Evgeny Golobrosdky	Givataim	1745	131

Italy

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Marco Lombardi	Genova	2039	728
3	Dario Minieri	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Luca Chiera	Roma	2002	1232
5	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Matteo Bianchi	Massa	1963	697
7	Matteo Di Tomaso	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Alessandro Vegna	La Spezia	1944	522
9	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9	Simone Rossi	Roma	1938	639

Japan

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Masahiko Morita	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Tsuyoshi Fujita	Osaka-Shi	2016	1267
3	Katsuhiro Mori	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Gorou Matsuo	Kahoku-Gun	2007	519
5	Tsuyoshi Ikeda	Fukuoka-Shi	1998	676
6	Yuusuke Sasaki	Sendai-Shi	1975	484
7	Kazuhiko Mitsuya	[illegible]	1970	[illegible]
8	Eisaku Itadani	Kurashiki-Shi	1965	682
9	Jun Okamoto	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Itaru Ishida	Meguro-Ku	1960	940

Luxembourg

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Fabrice Encelle	[illegible]	1837	180
2	Charles Delvaux	Luxembourg	1833	238
3	Romain Glodt	[illegible]	1775	92
4	Jerome Vilm	Strassen	1754	362
5	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Charel Lorang	Luxembourg	1727	157
7	Fabrice Cauria	[illegible]	[illegible]	59
8	Steve Hatto	Izeg	1682	147
9	Steve Bruck	[illegible]	[illegible]	132
10	Jhemp Weihnachter	Luxembourg	1663	53

Malaysia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
2	Pang Ming Wee	Selangor	1910	586
4	Han How Sim	Selangor	1884	285
6	Wai Kin Au Yong	Petaling Jaya	1868	468
8	Allen Boon Her Tee	Kuala Lumpur	1858	269
9	Terry Soh	Petaling Jaya	1835	622
10	Kim Yin Kok	Kuala Lumpur	1824	405

Mexico

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
2	Alexander Sacal	Mexico City	1919	677
4	Enric Rodamilans	Mexico City	1879	676
6	Francisco Barbosa	Mexico City	1846	678
8	Julio Vazquez	Mexico City	1840	361
10	Gustavo Chapela	Mexico City	1825	545

Netherlands

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
2	Kamiel Cornelissen	Enschede	2052	852
4	Bram Snepvangers	Utrecht	2001	1971
6	Tom van de Logt	Groesbeek	1987	699
7	Matt Hensta	Tilburg	1977	495
10	Joost Vollebregt	Amsterdam	1976	729

New Zealand

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
2	Cole Swannack	Auckland	1929	360
4	Kerei Laycock	Palmerston North	1906	330
6	Roger Miller	Lower Hutt	1855	528
7	Digby Carter	Christchurch	1853	419
10	Gene Brumby	Wellington	1843	487

Northern Ireland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	David Gray	Belfast	1825	598
2	Thomas Michael Carlisle	Carrickfergus	1809	149
4	Thomas Monaghan	Holywood	1738	245
6	Ronan Donnelly	Antrim	1722	309
7	Mark Hunter	Belfast	1721	237
8	Roger Dane	Belfast	1717	429
10	Aaron Rolph	Belfast	1689	190

Norway

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Øyvind Ødegaard			
2	Nicolai Herzog	Oslo	1992	1443
4	Bjørn Jocumsen	Jessheim	1965	1187
6	Haakon Monsen		1947	1068
7	Thomas Johansen	Tromsoe	1934	216
8	Sigurd Eskeland		1925	1275
10	Eivind Nitter	Oslo	1907	933

Peru

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
2	Steven Ludwig Hayes	Lima	1894	284
4	Renato Bustamante	Arequipa	1798	109
6	Ronie Barrios Da Fano	Lima	1742	239
8	Jean Paul Hindreus	Lima	1737	174
10	Castareda Maick	Lima	1733	164

Philippines

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
2	Mark Herrin	Quezon City	1898	763
4	Bayani Manansala	Caloocan City	1869	345
6	Richie Chua	Quezon City	1859	339
8	Edsel Alvarez	Quezon City	1853	543
10	Manchester Sy	Manila	1846	437

Poland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
2	Przemek Oberbek	Warsaw	1889	899
4	Marcin Sados	Warsaw	1862	262
5	Krzysztof Domaszewski	Warszawa	1861	462
8	Jarek Paszkiewicz	Szczecin	1850	487
10	Lukasz Gieron	Tychy	1845	505

Portugal

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
2	Joao Duarte	Mafra	1931	705
4	Hugo Machado	Lisboa	1918	859
6	Pedro Dores	Baixa Da Banheira	1902	419
8	Pedro Baliadeiro	Forte Da Casa	1881	491
10	Frederico Bastos	Lisbon	1874	940

Russian Federation

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
2	Yaroslav Kondrashov	St.Petersburg	1917	1215
4	Alexander Strakhov	Moscow	1880	1219
5	Peter Danushevskey	Moscow	1874	256
6	Marat Asanov	Moscow	1865	672
8	Nikolai Potovin	Moscow	1858	622
10	Pavel Solyanko	Moscow	1849	1016

Scotland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Julian Haigh			
2	Edward Ross	Beith	1915	729
4	Darryl E Tweedale	Edinburgh	1829	541
5	Nik Iskandar	Riccarton	1827	598
6	Benjamin Sanders	Midlothian	1820	525
8	Barry Brown	Aberdeenshire	1813	449
10	Gary Campbell	Benholm	1799	1283

Singapore

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
2	Chang Chiau	Singapore	1986	513
4	Ding Yuan Leong	Singapore	1969	871
6	Albertus Hui Chin Law	Singapore	1961	854
8	Lance Chin Wei Yeong	Singapore	1902	552
10	Steven Tan	Singapore	1891	390

Slovak Republic

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Jan Tomcani	Bratislava	1891	805
2	Peter Bero	Bratislava	1840	554
3	Robert Jurkovic	Bratislava	1834	694
4	Juraj Smrek	Bratislava	1830	563
6	Dalibor Szaghi	Senec	1812	431
8	Matej Zatlkaj	Bratislava	1774	218
10	Richard Von Glasner	Bratislava	1765	174

Slovenia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Andrej Brglez	Kamnica		
2	Matej Brezavscek	Ljubljana	1888	258
4	Jakob Tomse	Ljubljana	1862	401
6	Ziga Fritz	Piran	1814	693
8	Zeljko Vasic	Portoroz	1795	410
10	Ziga Skrbec	Ljubljana	1785	585

South Africa

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Pieter Loubser	Bellville	1927	500
2	Christiaan Du Plessis	Pietersburg	1915	224
3	Andrew Klein	Cape Town	1901	519
4	Jason Neale	Pretoria	1893	487
4	Lourens Scholtz	Nigel	1893	383
6	Grant Van Dyk	Cape Town	1871	641
7	Andrew Stephens	Johannesburg	1869	563
8	David Hofmeyr	Johannesburg	1867	474
9	Russel Lunt	Cape Town	1856	652
10	Alan Campbell	Cape Town	1851	445

South Korea

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Ahhaan Kim	Seoul	1806	212
2	Sang Seok Lee	Seoul	1790	175
3	Kang Jisang	Seoul	1779	305
4	Heung-Jin Jung	Seoul	1776	220
5	Joon-Ho Hong	Pusan	1770	196
6	Hyun-Il Jang	Seoul	1759	198
7	Joshua Cho	Apo	1757	177
8	Kyoungkun Nam	Seoul	1740	102
9	Dong-Woo Son	Seoul	1739	275
9	Minsu Kim	Sungnam	1739	193

Spain

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Carlos Barredo	Madrid	1964	509
2	Daniel Bethencourt	Vilanova	1934	512
3	Manuel Espinos	Valencia	1895	411
4	Joaquin Gasa	Barcelona	1893	469
5	Ivan Garcia	Las Palmas	1892	346
6	Francisco José Hidalgo	Martorell	1880	540
7	Carlos Gomez Villota	Madrid	1874	296
8	Roc Herms	Rubi	1873	635
9	Jacob Arias Garcia	Castellbisbal	1868	237
10	Roberto Maestro	Valladolid	1863	242

Sweden

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Anton Jonsson	Umeå	2139	423
2	Rickard Österberg	Göteborg	1985	605
3	Thomas Rankovic	Malmoe	1976	561
4	Olle Rade	Göteborg	1975	599
5	Jörgen Karlsson	Göteborg	1941	1121
6	David Linder	Norrtalje	1941	423
7	Mattias Lund	Halmstad	1931	441
8	Albert Alshamn	Göteborg	1926	372
9	Jens Thoren	Umeå	1922	638
10	Martin Berlin	Jönköping	1915	359

Switzerland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Dave Mastrandi	Bern	1907	338
2	Mario Steger	Künten	1888	617
3	Jacques Seeberger	Rolle	1887	408
4	Michael Mayer	Laupen	1881	412
5	Martin Zuercher	Biglen	1879	381
6	Gennari Raphael	Genève	1874	620
7	Niklaus Hugi	Thun	1872	685
8	Michael Suwald	Zurich	1865	304
8	Omar Rohner	Madrid	1865	419
10	Clement Fredembach	Servion	1854	287

Taiwan

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Tzu Ching Kuo	Taipei	1935	573
2	Tobey Tamber	Kaohsiung	1926	1561
3	Chen-Yu Hung	Taipei	1912	298
4	Norris Ming Jer Song	Taipei	1910	839
5	Willie Tan	Hsinchu	1898	1001
6	Chi-Chung Hwang	Taipei	1896	668
7	Kuo-Yuan Hsu Chu	Hsin Yuan	1891	581
8	Jack Ho	Taipei	1884	518
9	Chiang Alan	Taipei Taiwan	1883	1113
10	Hiei Don	Taipei	1877	452

Thailand

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Somchai Jirapongtrakul	Samutsakorn	1875	501
2	Mongkol Tachasukjai	Bangkok	1866	645
3	Veerapat Sirilertvorakul	Samutsakorn	1852	409
4	Phattharaset Yeodkolkij	Bangkok	1846	237
5	Chai Jongpinit	Bnagkok	1829	511
6	Arvi Limpadanai	Bangkok	1810	292
7	Prapon Maneechareonwong	Bangkok	1808	279
8	Thapong Ruangsomboon	Bangkok	1807	305
10	Wattanachai Chenarak	Bangkok	1803	472

Turkey

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Yusuf Vefa	Istanbul	1838	378
2	Basar Coskunoglu	Istanbul	1836	179
3	Eda Bilsel	Istanbul	1818	176
4	Burcak Caner	Istanbul	1808	248
5	Vedat Özpriaho	Istanbul	1795	168
6	Hakki Özbasli	Izmir	1795	230
6	Siyar Ertem	Istanbul	1795	281
8	Osman Ozguney	Istanbul	1764	170
8	Emre Karaca	Istanbul	1734	159
10	Mustafa Erkol	Istanbul	1749	136

Ukraine

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Yuri Kuzubov	Kiev	1947	1113
2	Andrey Rybalchenko	Kiev	1942	507
3	Artem Kovchak	Kiev	1916	466
4	Rostyslav Savchuk	Kiev	1854	1272
5	Ivanna Zhovnirska	Kiev	1842	468
6	Sergey Kuznetsov	Dnepropetrovsk	1837	443
7	Andrey Gubichev	Poltava	1822	419
8	Andrey Alekseev	Kiev	1818	761
9	Yuri Kovalev	Kiev	1815	462
10	Vladimir Omelyanyuk	Kiev	1781	553

United Arab Emirates

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Mark Weedon	Dubai	1844	447
2	Jordan Gallant	Dubai	1819	309
3	Russel Mirara	Dubai	1776	337
4	Jaksa Knez	Dubai	1714	261
5	Jeff Kearns	Abu Dhabi	1703	208
6	Vishak Menon	Dubai	1679	133
7	Glenn Caratão	Dubai	1666	91
7	Dylan Koopman	Dubai	1658	28
9	James Dabbs	Abu Dhabi	1647	18
10	Marin Knez	Dubai	1643	214

United States

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Eugene Harvey	Hillsborough	2081	417
2	Neil Reeves	Little Rock	2066	1115
3	Eric Froehlich	Stamford	2062	654
4	Brian Selden	San Diego	2060	829
5	Thomas Guevin	Nashua	2057	975
6	Brian Kibler	Atlanta	2056	736
6	Ken Ho	San Francisco	2056	479
8	Oxyp Lebedowicz	Union	2054	786
9	Jeff Sarwer	Tampa	2047	616
10	Patrick Chapin	Ann Arbor	2046	658

Uruguay

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Guillermo Enciclo	Montevideo	1863	397
2	Rodrigo Asuaga	Montevideo	1825	285
3	Jose Pablo Kin	Montevideo	1824	476
4	Jorge Estefan	Montevideo	1807	357
5	Alejandro Arechavi	Montevideo	1806	118
5	Ian Lampel	Montevideo	1802	470
7	Nestor Pisano	Montevideo	1800	112
8	Fernando Veiga	Montevideo	1797	580
9	Alexander Wester	Montevideo	1796	346
10	Guzman Vilanova	Montevideo	1784	199

Venezuela

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Leonardo Uzcategui	Cabudare	1873	419
2	Eduardo Muñoz	Caracas	1846	214
3	Marlon Gar	Caracas	1805	241
4	Jonatan Alves	Caracas	1804	217
5	Edward Peraza	Barquisimeto	1774	374
6	Rafael Meneses	Caracas	1771	258
6	Jhonnie Goncalves	Caracas	1771	208
8	Jesus Somaza	Barquisimeto	1760	182
8	Rogerio Moya	Barquisimeto	1760	44
10	Juan Mejias	Caracas	1752	202

Wales

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Richard Edbury	Cardiff	1890	962
2	Roy Williams	Swansea	1875	725
3	Joan Lloyd	Swansea	1822	648
4	Steve Batten	Penarth	1798	298
5	Madog Williams	Cardiff	1795	181
6	Clint Oldridge	Cardiff	1786	206
7	Jimmy Chung	North Cornelly	1771	418
8	Simon Cox	Mid Glamorgan	1759	354
9	Philip Bree	Swansea	1756	404
10	Martin Lawrence	Swansea	1751	186

Yugoslavia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Dusan Kazmaier	Novi Sad	1816	318
2	Vladimir Kamenac	Novi Sad	1806	310
3	Lazar Gelcer	Novi Sad	1745	184
4	Dane Basta	Novi Sad	1737	326
5	Ilija Antic	Beograd	1729	324
6	Milos Milinkovic	Beograd	1728	88
7	Nikola Nikolic	Novi Sad	1710	195
8	Milutin Kecojevic	Beograd	1695	124
9	Srdjan Kovac	Beograd	1693	81
10	Marko Mladjan	Belgrade	1685	46

DCI Information

In each issue, DCI Manager Jeff Donais answers questions from Sideboard readers. To submit a question, email jeff.donais@wizards.com with "Ask the DCI" as the subject line. Questions may be edited for grammar and readability.

Q: Are judges allowed to play in tournaments?

A: In the recent past, the DCI allowed judges and organizers to play in tournaments under the three-judge system. As of September 1, 2002, the three-judge system has been eliminated from DCI sanctioned tournaments. As a result, judges are no longer allowed under any circumstances to participate in sanctioned tournaments that they are judging, and organizers are no longer allowed to participate in sanctioned tournaments for which they are the tournament organizer of record.

The three-judge system was removed because of abuse of the system and the difficulties encountered in tournaments using it.

Q: What kinds of sleeves are legal in sanctioned tournaments?

A: There are currently no card sleeves officially banned by the DCI. However, any card sleeves that are noticeably marked are not allowed in tournaments. Players should be vigilant, because some models of sleeves, especially older ones, could come marked right out of the packaging. I recommend returning any sleeves that are badly marked when they come out of the box.

It's important for players to examine their sleeves regularly, especially when they first get new sets of sleeves. Players should always shuffle their decks before sleeving them to reduce the chance of receiving a penalty for marked cards with a pattern.

Certain sleeves are extremely shiny and would allow a player to see his or her next card if he or she lifted it up slightly from the top of the library. At this time, we aren't going to ban these sleeves in sanctioned tournaments, but if a player lifts up the top card of the library any amount, it will be considered cheating.

Q: If I'm already qualified for the Junior Super Series Championship, can I play in Super Series Challenges anyway?

A: Starting with the 2002–2003 season, a player who has placed *first* in a Junior Super Series Challenge may not compete in Junior Super Series Challenges for the remainder of the season. Players who place second or lower may continue to compete in future Challenges. Basically, this means that once you've won the first-place scholarship prize, you can't compete at a Challenge until next season.

Q: Is the DCI thinking of introducing any new formats for Magic?

A: For the near future, the answer is no. We don't want to have too many sanctioned formats, because the tournament environment would eventually become diluted. We already have a ton of support for Standard, Extended, and Block Constructed, and a small amount of support for Type 1. We still sanction Type 1.5 tournaments, although only a moderate number of sanctioned tournaments each year use that format. However, we do want to keep an open mind. If the situation presents itself, we may introduce something in the coming years. Since next year is the tenth anniversary of **Magic**, we may do something special for that milestone in **Magic** history. Stay tuned to this column for future info.

DCI Format Construction Rules

For the most updated DCI deck construction rules, check **thedci.com**

Standard

Permitted Sets
Seventh Edition
Invasion (and later)
Planeshift (and later)
Apocalypse (and later)
Odyssey
Torment
Judgment
Onslaught (as of 2/1/02)

Banned Cards
None

Odyssey Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Odyssey
Torment
Judgment

Banned Cards
None

Invasion Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Invasion
Planeshift
Apocalypse

Banned Cards
None

Masques Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Mercadian Masques
Nemesis
Prophecy

Banned Cards
Lin Sivvi, Defiant Hero
Rishadan Port

Urza Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Urza's Saga
Urza's Legacy
Urza's Destiny

Banned Cards
Gaea's Cradle
Memory Jar
Serra's Sanctum
Time Spiral
Tolarian Academy
Voltaic Key
Windfall

Tempest Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Tempest
Stronghold
Exodus

Banned Cards
Cursed Scroll

Mirage Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Mirage
Visions
Weatherlight

Banned Cards
Squandered Resources

Ice Age Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Ice Age
Alliances
Homelands

Banned Cards
Amulet of Quoz
Thawing Glaciers
Timmerian Fiends
Zuran Orb

Extended

Permitted Sets
Fifth Edition (and later)
Classic (Sixth Edition)
Seventh Edition
Ice Age (and later)
Homelands (and later)
Alliances (and later)
Mirage (and later)
Visions (and later)
Weatherlight (and later)
Tempest
Stronghold
Exodus
Urza's Saga
Urza's Legacy
Urza's Destiny
Mercadian Masques
Nemesis
Prophecy
Invasion
Planeshift
Apocalypse
Odyssey
Torment
Judgment
Onslaught (as of 2/1/02)
The ten dual lands (and later)

Banned Cards
Amulet of Quoz
Dark Ritual
Demonic Consultation
Dream Halls
Earthcraft
Lotus Petal
Mana Vault
Memory Jar
Mind Over Matter
Necropotence
Replenish
Survival of the Fittest
Time Spiral
Timmerian Fiends
Tolarian Academy
Windfall
Yawgmoth's Bargain
Yawgmoth's Will
Zuran Orb

Type 1

Permitted Sets
All basic and expansion sets and promotional cards

Banned Cards
Amulet of Quoz
Bronze Tablet
Chaos Orb
Contract from Below
Darkpact
Demonic Attorney
Falling Star
Jeweled Bird
Rebirth
Tempest Efreet
Timmerian Fiends

Restricted Cards
Ancestral Recall
Balance
Berserk
Black Lotus
Black Vise
Braingeyser
Channel
Crop Rotation
Demonic Consultation
Demonic Tutor
Doomsday
Dream Halls
Enlightened Tutor
Fact or Fiction
Fastbond
Fork
Frantic Search
Grim Monolith
Hurkyl's Recall
Library of Alexandria
Lotus Petal
Mana Crypt
Mana Vault
Memory Jar
Mind Over Matter
Mind Twist
Mox Diamond
Mox Emerald
Mox Jet
Mox Pearl
Mox Ruby
Mox Sapphire
Mystical Tutor
Necropotence
Recall
Regrowth
Sol Ring
Strip Mine
Stroke of Genius
Time Spiral
Time Walk
Timetwister
Tinker
Tolarian Academy
Vampiric Tutor
Voltaic Key
Wheel of Fortune
Windfall
Yawgmoth's Bargain
Yawgmoth's Will

Type 1.5

Permitted Sets
All basic and expansion sets and promotional cards

Banned Cards
All cards on the Type 1 Banned and Restricted lists

Worldwide Tournament News

by Jeff Donais, DCI Tournament Manager

Type 1 Championships

If you're a fan of Type 1, we have some great news for you. Beginning in 2003, the tenth anniversary of **Magic**, the DCI will host a Type 1 Championship at **Origins**. The event will probably be held on the Saturday of the convention and have a $10 entrance fee. The exact prizes are still to be determined, but will definitely be cool.

Type 1 is too old-school to be a Pro Tour format, but now, Type 1 players will finally be able to find out who's the best.

Onslaught Prerelease

The world gets a chance to play with *Onslaught* cards for the first time on September 28. Players in the prerelease will receive one tournament pack and two booster packs of *Onslaught* and an exclusive *Onslaught* foil rare with a brand-new design. As always, going to a prerelease is the best deal you can get for your **Magic** dollar.

Last Chance Qualifiers

A new feature has been added to all Pro Tour events. Beginning with Pro Tour–Boston, a special Last Chance Qualifier will be run for anyone who isn't already invited to the Pro Tour and wants one last shot to "go pro". The best part: The Team Limited qualifier will award two slots to the Pro Tour, and each other qualifier will award four Pro Tour slots!

For the three Limited-format Pro Tour events (one team, two individual), the qualifiers will follow the same format as the Pro Tour events they are held before. For the two Constructed-format Pro Tour events, the format for the Last Chance Qualifier will be Standard. The events will be held at the Pro Tour site and will usually start in the early evening or late afternoon on the day before the Pro Tour begins.

Upcoming Events

The Grand Prix circuit is getting into full swing once again this fall. Up through the end of September, you'll get a chance to play in Block Constructed Grand Prix events that feed Pro Tour–Houston. These Grand Prix stops include Sapporo, London, Cleveland, and Hamburg. In October and November, you'll get a chance to play *Onslaught* Sealed Deck at Grand Prix events in Utsunomiya, Copenhagen, Philadelphia, Melbourne, and Los Angeles. Each Grand Prix awards a total of $25,000 in prize money, $7,500 of which goes to amateur competitors (those that have no pro points).

State Championships

Your first chance to play Standard with *Onslaught* will come on November 2, when players around the world participate in their local "Champs" tournaments. Whether you're in New Zealand competing for an Island Championship, Canada competing for a Provincial Championship, or the U.S. competing for a State Championship, you're sure to enjoy the event. All of the events let you play the new Standard format at the earliest possible opportunity. These are fun events with a focus on tough competition in a low-pressure setting.

Pro Tour Masters Series

The Masters Series pits the best of the best of Magic players against each other for money and prestige. Four times a season, the most accomplished professional players compete in single-elimination competition. Masters Series events are held at each of the four individual-format Pro Tour stops. At each stop, players compete in an unforgiving single-elimination tournament for the chance to win a part of the $150,000 prize purse.

In addition to the players who are invited via pro points, there is a special event held just before the Masters Series starts to give other players a chance to win a spot in the competition. These Gateway tournaments are open to anyone with a minimum of 7 pro points or 1900 DCI rating. Starting with the 2002–2003 tournament season, we will invite the Top 4 competitors from individual-format Gateway tournaments into the Masters Series main event. You can find out more details about the Masters Series by checking out **wizards.com/events**.

Although the Masters Series is one of the toughest events to qualify for, it is very rewarding in terms of helping players make a living playing Magic. **Sideboard.com** provides live coverage of all the Masters Series events.

2002–2003 Masters Schedule

Date	City	Format	Prize
Nov. 7, 2002	Houston	Booster Draft	$150,000
Jan. 16, 2003	Chicago	Standard	$150,000
Mar. 20, 2003	Venice	Team Rochester	$150,000
May 8, 2003	Yokohama	Extended	$150,000

Events Calendar

August 2002–June 2003

August

August–September **Qualifier Season for PT–Houston** Block Constructed
8–11 **Gen Con Game Fair–Milwaukee**
10 ***Sideboard* Team Challenge–Milwaukee** (nonsanctioned)
14–18 **World Championships–Sydney** Standard, Booster Draft, Extended & Block
24–25 **Grand Prix–Sapporo** Block Constructed
29–September 1 **UK Gen Con Game Fair–London**
31–September 1 **Grand Prix–London** Block Constructed

September

7–8 **Grand Prix–Cleveland** Block Constructed
27–29 **Pro Tour–Boston** Team Sealed & Rochester Draft
28–29 **Grand Prix–Hamburg** Block Constructed
28–29 ***Onslaught* Prerelease** Sealed Deck

October

October–November **Qualifier Season for PT–Chicago** Sealed with Rochester Draft Finals
7 ***Onslaught* Release Date**
12–13 **Grand Prix–Utsunomiya** Sealed with Rochester Draft Finals
12–13 **Grand Prix–Copenhagen** Sealed with Rochester Draft Finals
26–27 **Grand Prix–Philadelphia** Sealed with Rochester Draft Finals

November

2–3 **State/Provincial/Territory/Island Championships** Standard
7–10 **Houston Masters Series** Booster Draft
8–10 **Pro Tour–Houston** Extended
23–24 **Grand Prix–Australia** Sealed with Rochester Draft Finals
23–24 **Grand Prix–Los Angeles** Sealed with Rochester Draft Finals
30–December 1 **Grand Prix–Reims** Extended

December

December–January **Qualifier Season for PT–Venice** Extended

January 2003

tbd **Grand Prix–Santiago** Extended
tbd **Grand Prix–New Orleans** Extended
16–19 **Chicago Masters Series** Standard
17–19 **Pro Tour–Chicago** Rochester Draft
25–26 **Grand Prix–Hiroshima** Extended
25–26 ***Legions* Prerelease** Sealed Deck

February

tbd **Grand Prix–Singapore** Sealed with Booster Draft Finals
February–April **Qualifier Season for PT–Yokohama** Sealed with Booster Draft Finals
3 ***Legions* Release Date**

March

tbd **Grand Prix–Kyoto** Format TBD
20–23 **Venice Masters Series** Team Rochester
21–23 **Pro Tour–Venice** Block Constructed

May

May–July **Qualifier Season for PT–Boston** Team Sealed with Rochester Draft Finals
3 **U.S./Canadian Regionals** Standard
8–11 **Yokohama Masters Series** Extended
9–11 **Pro Tour–Yokohama** Booster Draft
17–18 **"Jack" Prerelease** Sealed Deck
26 **"Jack" Release Date**

June

tbd **Grand Prix–Shizuoka** Format TBD
tbd **European Championship–United Kingdom** Standard & Rochester Draft
19–22 **Canada National Championship–Montreal** Standard & Rochester Draft
26–29 **Origins International Game Expo & Fair–Columbus**
27–29 **U.S. National Championship–San Diego** Standard & Rochester Draft
28 **Type 1 Championship at Origins** Type 1
28–29 **Junior Super Series Championship–San Diego** Standard

Subject to Change
Events, dates, locations, and formats may change, especially for tournaments farther ahead in the schedule. Check wizards.com/tournaments for the most up-to-date event information.

Event Coverage
Sideboard Online provides live coverage of many tournaments around the world. Check the *Sideboard* Event Coverage section at sideboard.com for more information.

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They'll miss you back home.

Who would want to stay home, when they can experience hard-hitting action at the Grand Prix? This is an event you don't want to miss. It's an opportunity to qualify yourself for the Pro Tour and check out countless side-events. You'll meet the Magic: The Gathering artists, get the chance to trade cards with other players and much more. Don't wait any longer, come experience this unforgettable adventure.

GP Hamburg	September 28-29	8 qualifications for Pro Tour Houston
Venue: Curiohaus – Rothenbaumchaussee 11 – 20148 Hamburg		
Format: Block Constructed	Registration fee: 10 Euro	Pre-registration
for Germany : 06074-3755555 All other countries : + 32-70-233.277		

DCI

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